Hafa Adai!

‘Senate leaders must stop using retirees in political game’ PAGE 2

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Saipan Tribune

THE CNMI’S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER

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Fuel passes $6 mark on Saipan

KIMBERLY ESMORES

Mobil Oil Marianas raised its fuel prices by 30 cents yesterday. Other photo shows motorists lining up at a Shell gas station on Middle Road to gas up. Shell typically raises its prices later than Mobil.

By KIMBERLY B. ESMORES
kimberly_esmores@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The CNMI continues to see back-to-back increases in fuel prices, with yesterday’s 30-cent increase pushing Saipan past the $6 mark, on the heels of international news that the United States will ban the import of Russian oil as sanction for its invasion of Ukraine over a week ago.

At around 3:40pm yesterday, Mobil Oil Marianas took the lead after raising its fuel

See FUEL on Page 4

AT A GLANCE

As of 5:17pm, March 9 2022

VACCINATIONS IN THE CNMI

Eligible Population Additional Dose Vaccinated: 57.5%

Days since last community transmission 2

Pfizer/BioNTech	
Initiated:	37,993
Fully Vaccinated:	37,176
Moderna	
Initiated:	5,343
Fully Vaccinated:	5,205
Janssen	
Fully vaccinated:	1,148
Additional Dose:	21,452

GUAM	OLD	NEW	TOTAL
Positive	45,837	163	46,000
Recovered	43,799	244	44,043
Active	1,459	163	1,622
Deaths	334	1	335

SAIPAN	OLD	NEW	TOTAL
Positive	10,154	75	10,229
Recovered	9,691	138	9,829
Active	295	75	370
Deaths	30	0	30

Source: Joint Information Center - Guam, Commonwealth Healthcare Corp., https://www.vaccinatecnmi.com/vax-dashboard/

COMMUNITY VULNERABILITY

LEGEND:

- **Red:** Least safe
- **Orange**
- **Yellow**
- **Blue**
- **Green:** Safest

Source: Office of the Governor

US banning all Russian oil imports

By ZEKE MILLER, MIKE BALSAMO and JOSH BOAK
ASSOCIATED PRESS

Biden

WASHINGTON (AP)—Striking harder at Russia’s economy, President Joe Biden on Tuesday ordered a ban on Russian oil imports in retaliation for Vladimir Putin’s onslaught in Ukraine. The major trade action, responding to the pleas of Ukraine’s embattled leader, thrust the U.S. out front as Western nations seek to halt Putin’s invasion.

Americans will feel pain, too—at the gas pump—Biden acknowledged, declaring, “Defending freedom is going to cost.”

The imports have

See US on Page 4

Kilili seeks more CW-1 visas for construction workers

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

With the CNMI swimming in federal dollars intended for reconstruction and infrastructure hardening, or disaster recovery projects, that means the CNMI will need more construction workers far beyond the current limit set by law.

To resolve this, Delegate Gregorio Kilili C. Sablan (Ind-MP) introduced Thursday a bill that seeks to allow the continued availability of

See KILILI on Page 4

INSIDE

BUSINESS
United launches a fundraising effort that will fly aid workers and supplies to Ukraine.
Page 12

WORLD
A humanitarian crisis is unfolding in encircled Mariupol and Tuesday brought no relief.
Page 13

ENVIRONMENT
The CNMI Youth Affairs Office has been making sure that beaches and parks are clean and safe.
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SPECIAL BOARD MEETING NOTICE

Pursuant to Public Law 8-41, Section 11, the Marianas Visitors Authority hereby gives notice that a Special Board of Directors Meeting will be held on March 11, 2022 at 1:00 p.m. at the Bar K Diner's Conference Room, Tinian.

The Marianas

MEETING AGENDA

1) **Preliminary Matters**
   a. Call to Order
   b. Roll Call
   c. Adoption of Agenda
2) **Public Comments**
3) **Old Business**
   a. MVA-RFP-22-2047: Marianas Visitors Authority Tourism Resumption Investment Plan–Airlines Incentive
4) **New Business**
   a. MVA HQ Office Space Rental
5) **Executive Session**
6) **Miscellaneous/Announcements**
7) **Adjournment**

/s/Viola Alepuyo
Chairperson, MVA Board of Directors

Local

'Senate leaders must stop using retirees in political game'

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Expressing disbelief over the pre-filing of another joint resolution for the payment of $1,000 government retirees' bonuses, Sen. Paul A. Manglona (Ind-Rota) said yesterday that the Senate leadership needs to stop using retirees in their political game.

"Let's give them what we promised them," said Manglona, referring to government retirees.

He said the Senate leadership could have appointed the conferees to the conference committee since early last week and these $1,000 retirees' bonuses should have been issued already.

The senator said he does not understand why the Senate leadership want to continue prolonging the issuance of the $1,000 retirees' bonus checks.

Manglona

In a separate news release from the House leadership yesterday, is quoted House Speaker Edmund Villagomez (Ind-Saipan) as saying that the latest Senate proposal "once again misses the mark."

"I thank the senators for their removal of the 100% reprogramming authority, but their latest proposal still does not identify funding sources and still contains a fundamental flaw that prevents our retirees from getting their bonus," Villagomez said. "Even if it was proper to create a business unit via joint resolution, absent any funding in that business unit, nothing can be reprogrammed into it. The business unit is just that, a business unit that's inactive. "

Senate President Jude U. Hofschneider (R-Tinian) and five other Republican senators pre-filed Monday Senate Joint Resolution 22-09 to approve Gov. Ralph DLG Torres' request to create a new program and business unit for the $1,000 bonuses.

The joint resolution also approves Torres' request to reprogram $2.6 million from within the Executive Branch for the payment of the retirees' bonuses.

The other senators who co-sponsored the joint resolution are Justo S. Quitugua (R-Saipan), Vinnie F. Sablan (R-Saipan), Victor B. Hocog (R-Rota), Karl King-Nabors (R-Tinian), and Francisco Q. Cruz (R-Tinian).

The joint resolution does not include any language about giving the governor 100% reprogramming authority, which was why the House Democrat representatives balked at and rejected a previous Senate version of the bill for retirees' bonuses.

Manglona said yesterday he thought the Senate leadership already understood clearly the legality question over the lack of a business unit. Manglona said the Senate leadership agreed already to work on House Bill 22-91, as amended by the Senate.

The House earlier chose not to act on a previously approved Senate joint resolution (22-05), choosing instead to pass a House bill (22-91, HD1) that proposes to amend the fiscal year 2022 budget law to establish a business unit and allocate $1.3 million to pay $500 bonuses for each government retiree.

Manglona said the House went further to identify the funding source and that what the House did was reasonable as the Senate just needed to appoint three conferees to meet in a joint conference and come up with a compromise measure.

"Why all off a sudden they want to go back to square one, using a resolution, is anyone's guess," Manglona said.

The Senate later approved House Bill 22-91, HD1 to allocate $1.3 million in local funds to pay $500 bonuses for each government retiree but it inserted some amendments, including increasing the bonus payout to $1,000.

The House then rejected the Senate's version of the bill. Democrat representatives opposed a language in the Senate's version that will give Torres' 100% reprogramming authority over the budget. The House agreed to the creation of a conference committee that will hammer out with the Senate a mutually acceptable bill for retirees' bonuses.

The House's three-member conference committee subsequently filed a substitute bill that will re-appropriate $2.62 million in local funds from sources that are already identified, including provisions that were originally passed by both the House and Senate but line-item vetoed by Torres.

Hofschneider did not appoint Senate conferees and instead filed Monday Senate Joint Resolution 22-09.

Saipan Tribune
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'CNMI at high transmission but numbers are going down'

With the CNMI in the middle of a surge in COVID-19 infections arising from the omicron variant, the Commonwealth currently falls under the high category of the U.S Center for Disease Control and Prevention's COVID-19 community levels.

During a virtual press briefing with the Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. last week, Stephanie Kern-Allely, regional communicable disease epidemiologist for the Pacific Island Health Officers Association, said this is where the CNMI is at based on COVID-19 data from March 1.

Kern-Allely

Kern-Allely said the CDC has released new COVID-19 guidelines, including metrics to measure COVID-19 community levels. The three new metrics used to measure COVID-19 community levels include: new COVID cases per 100,000 people in the last seven days, new COVID admissions per 100,000 people, and the percent of inpatient beds occupied by COVID-19 patients.

Although the CNMI is considered low on two of these three metrics, because of the consistent high number of daily cases, the CNMI falls under the high category.

"Our current COVID-19 community level in the CNMI, with data up to March 1, is high. Although two of our three are sort of close to that lower, medium mark, we still have really high rates of COVID-19 here in the community and we're also seeing cases on Tinian [and] Rota, which we didn't see with the delta surge back in December. So, until that overall transmission number comes down a little bit further, we'll still be in this high category," she said.

Fortunately, despite the current high transmission rate, the CNMI is slowly starting to see a decline in the number of daily cases.

"That's been declining in recent weeks, which is great, great news. Thanks to folks getting their booster shots. We haven't seen this since the end of November. Now with the numbers coming down, I'm hopeful that the trend will continue," she said.

In terms of daily COVID-19 admissions, Kern-Allely said the CNMI has been fairly stable. "In the last couple of days, our hospitalizations and our admissions have been fairly stable, which is a testament to the high vaccination coverage," Kern-Allely said.

As for the third metric—percentage of inpatient beds occupied by COVID-19 patients—the CNMI is hovering at around 12% to about 10%, which is around the mdium category.

Overall, because the CNMI is still experiencing pretty high transmission rates, CHCC is encouraging everyone to avail of the free testing that is offered to ensure that the spread can be controlled.

"We've been seeing a reduction in testing over the past couple weeks. I would encourage folks to access testing. We want to make sure that we're keeping our friends and family safe. Make sure that you're not positive and you're not transmitting it to anybody that you might be seeing. I just want to encourage folks to continue to get tested," Kern-Allely said. ***(Kimberly B. Esmores)***

COVID UPDATE

75 new cases; 7 hospitalized

Seventy-five additional individuals have been confirmed positive for COVID-19, bringing the CNMI total to 10,229 cases since March 26, 2020. A duplicate has been deleted.

Of the 75 cases identified on March 7, 2022, eight were on Tinian. The vaccination statuses of the 75 cases are pending verification.

As of March 8, 2022, there were seven individuals hospitalized as a result of COVID-19: Five are vaccinated and two are partially vaccinated. One of the seven is on a ventilator.

In Guam, the Joint Information Center was notified that the territory's 335th COVID-19-related fatality occurred at the Guam Memorial Hospital on March 8, 2022. The patient was a 78-year-old male, fully vaccinated without a booster, who had underlying health conditions and tested positive on Feb. 28.

"To his family and friends who mourn his passing, [first gentleman] Jeff [Cook], [Lt. Gov.] Josh [Tenorio], and I extend our deepest condolences and sympathies. We hope that in this time of grieving and sadness, you're able to find healing," said Guam Gov. Lou Leon Guerrero in the JIC news release. "While COVID-19 has robbed us of too many loved ones, we will not be defeated. We have the tools to beat this virus. Let us continue to use them to push forward in recovery."

This came as the Guam Department of Public Health and Social Services reported 163 new cases of COVID-19 from 818 specimens analyzed on March 8, 2022.

Of the total number of cases that have been identified in the CNMI, there have already been 9,829 recoveries; 370 active case; and 30 COVID-19-related deaths. A total of 9,536 were identified via community testing and 693 via travel testing.

A total of 23 COVID-19 vaccine shots were administered on March 8, 2022.

As of yesterday, of the eligible population, 57.5% have already received an additional dose. The vaccination rate is calculated using the 2020 Census population estimates for the CNMI and includes the eligible 5-years-old and older population.

A total of 328 COVID-19 tests were conducted on March 7, 2022: 276 via Community-Based Testing; 45 at the Koblerville COVID-19 Community Center; and seven at Rota Health Center. ***(Saipan Tribune)***

Saipan, Tinian, Rota municipal councils create alliance

The 16th Saipan Municipal Council, 18th Rota Municipal Council, and 18th Tinian Municipal Council have banded together to create the nonprofit organization Pacific Alliance of Municipal Councils, with the aim to "...promote, preserve, strengthen, restore and enhance our obligation over local cultural traditions and heritage of our Mariana Islands."

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

The 16th Saipan Municipal Council, 18th Rota Municipal Council, and 18th Tinian Municipal Council come together to create the nonprofit organization Pacific Alliance of Municipal Councils.

The Pacific Alliance of Municipal Councils also "affirms our strong commitment to work collectively and cohesively for the attainment of mutual equality, respect, cooperation, harmony and advancement for all, in health, education, economic and environment."

In a news release on Monday, it said the three municipal councils have been meeting in the last few months to organize themselves and to identify priorities and they have agreed to pursue to clarify certain ambiguous areas in the CNMI Constitutional provisions, particularly Article VI, Section 7, Subsections (1) and (2) providing for their authority over the formulation and approval of local budget proposals.

"In order to achieve our objectives, it is important that the councils work together to acquire uniform authority over their respective municipalities and therefore will be seeking to clarify and strengthen our authority through encouraging collaboration with the mayors and legislative delegations to bring some questions to the CNMI Supreme Court or to amend certain ambiguous provisions in the CNMI Constitution through popular or legislative initiative," said Jim Atalig, the alliance's president.

In past years, Rota and Tinian municipal budget proposals were put together by the mayors in consultation with the municipal councils through a budget hearing held by the councils. Once approved, the mayors then submit their proposals to the governor for inclusion in the CNMI annual budget proposal to the Commonwealth Legislature for appropriation.

"Unfortunately, that is no longer the process being followed, and we are at a loss as to why the provisions of the CNMI Constitution is being ignored, even to the point of not being made aware of reprogramming appropriated funds as required by Article VI, Section 7, Subsection (2)," said Juanita M. Mendiola, vice president.

Saipan Municipal Council chair Ana Demapan-Castro would like to see the Saipan Council have the same authority over Saipan's local budget and that the name of the council be changed to Saipan and Northern Island Municipal Council.

"The way the municipalities are structured, it recognized that the islands are separated by waters and thus the Saipan Municipal Council was not given similar authorities, because the state government is situated on the island of Saipan. At that time, how this hindered community progress was not noticeable, but with population increases, it has become more and more acutely obvious how powerless the Saipan Municipal Council is over matters that are predominantly local," she said.

Meanwhile, Joseph E. Santos, who is chairman of the 18th Tinian Municipal Council, is hoping that the councils will successfully seek collaborative assistance from the mayors and legislative delegations to achieve the alliance's objective. "We are looking for a friendly and collaborative effort from all members of the CNMI leadership to support this movement for more direct representation and immediate benefit of our municipal constituents."

The members of the alliance include Demapan-Castro, Antonia Tudela, Daniel Aquino, Santos, Thomasa P. Mendiola, Jonovan Lizama, William Taitano, and Atalig. The alliance's officers are Atalig, president, Juanita M. Mendiola, vice president; and Lizama, secretary/treasurer. ***(Saipan Tribune)***

FUEL

From Page 1

prices by 30 cents, just five days after its last increase. As of 5:30pm press time, Shell Marianas had yet to raise its prices, which caused a traffic jam along Middle Road as people rushed to fill their tanks before the gas station officially raises its prices. Shell typically mirrors any Mobil gas price increase, so it was expected to soon implement its own price hike.

Yesterday, Mobil's Extra fuel went up from $ 5.76 a gallon to a whopping $6.06, the highest it has ever been in years. Mobil also increased its Supreme fuel price from $6.21 to $6.51 a gallon. Its diesel went from $6.13 to $6.53 a gallon.

The Mobil gas station on Tinian had also just increased its fuel prices last week by 20 cents. Saipan's sister is currently charging $7.50 per gallon of regular fuel while diesel had also gone up from $7.49 to $7.85. Mobil Tinian expects to increase prices again today but they were not informed how much of an increase would be implemented as of press time. The Mobil station on Tinian is an independently operated company and thus its price adjustments are not dictated by Mobil Oil Marianas.

Saipan Tribune was unable to get the current fuel prices on Rota as of 6pm press time.

According to a Mobil employee, the price of Saipan fuel today is the highest its ever been.

"In all my years pf working here and living on Saipan, I don't think gas has ever reached $6 and now we're even passed that. It's astonishing," she said.

A local motorist said he feels this is only the beginning of high gas prices and that the CNMI could even reach Tinian's and Rota's astonishingly expensive fuel.

"With the recent announcement made by U.S President Joe Biden banning Russian oil import, I'm sure we're only going to continue to see weekly increases in gas prices. I personally have no opinion on banning Russian oil, but my opinion about our fuel prices today, it's ridiculous. How will low-income individuals like myself afford gas with these crazy prices?" he said.

Another local 45-year-old motorist tried to inject some humor into the situation, saying that he now wants to invest in a horse or a cow and bring back the "old ways" of transportation.

"With these prices, it might be cheaper to get a horse or a cow to ride like the old days. If price keeps going up like this, your $10 won't even get you a tank of gas, especially if you drive a truck like me," he said.

US

From Page 1

been a glaring omission in the massive sanctions put in place on Russia over the invasion. Energy exports have kept a steady stream of cash flowing to Russia despite otherwise severe restrictions on its financial sector.

"We will not be part of subsidizing Putin's war," Biden said, calling the new action a "powerful blow" against Russia's ability to fund the ongoing offensive.

Biden said the U.S. was acting in close consultation with European allies, who are more dependent on Russian energy supplies and who he acknowledged may not be able to join in immediately. The announcement marked the latest Biden attempt at cutting off Russia from much of the global economy and ensuring that the Ukraine invasion is a strategic loss for Putin, even if he manages to seize territory.

"Ukraine will never be a victory for Putin," Biden said.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy in a tweet praised Biden's action: "Thankful for US and @POTUS personal leadership in striking in the heart of Putin's war machine and banning oil, gas and coal from US market. Encourage other countries and leaders to follow."

The European Union this week will commit to phasing out its reliance on Russia for energy needs as soon as possible, but filling the void without crippling EU economies will likely take some time. The U.K., which is no longer part of the EU, announced Tuesday that oil and oil products from Russia will be phased out by the end of the year.

Unlike the U.S., which is a major oil and gas producer, Europe relies on imports for 90% of its gas and 97% of its oil products. Russia supplies 40% of Europe's gas and a quarter of its oil. The U.S. does not import Russian natural gas.

The issue of oil sanctions has created a conflict for the president between political interests at home and efforts to impose costs on Russia. Though Russian oil makes up only a small part of U.S. imports, Biden has said he was reluctant to ban it, cutting into supplies here and pushing gasoline prices higher.

Inflation is at a 40-year peak, fueled in large part by gas prices, and that could hurt Biden heading into the November midterm elections.

"Putin's war is already hurting American families at the gas pump," Biden said, adding, "I'm going to do everything I can to minimize Putin's price hike here at home."

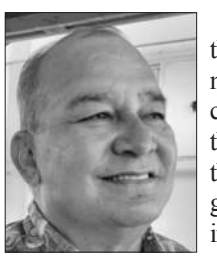
A longer version of this story is available at www. saipantribune.com

KILILI

From Page 1

Commonwealth Only Transitional Workers (CW-1) visas for construction workers beyond the 3,000-limit set for 2022.

Sablan said in his e-kilili newsletter over the weekend that he introduced H.R. 6906 in response to the request of the business community and the CNMI government and in recognition of the hundreds of millions of dollars Congress has provided to the Marianas for reconstruction and infrastructure hardening, or disaster recovery projects.



Sablan

He said H.R. 6906 authorizes the U.S. Homeland Security secretary to make the CW-1 visas available at the request of the CNMI governor.

The legislation seeks to amend Public Law 94-241 to authorize the Homeland Security secretary to increase the number of permits that are available to employers in construction and extraction occupations seeking CW-1 workers.

He acknowledged that this process might seem bureaucratic, but stated that the reality is that to set the number of visas or guess the time period in which they will be needed would be challenging for Congress.

The delegate said that, of the 3,000 CW-1 visas for construction workers for fiscal years 2020, 2021, and 2022 that were originally made available in his Disaster Recovery Workforce Act (enacted in U.S. Public Law 116-94), only about 100 have been used.

Sablan said that will change, however, as money for the Marianas public water system in the American Rescue Plan Act, for better roads in the infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, for solid waste management on Tinian and Rota in the 2019 Disaster Relief Act, and for other public and private projects are put to use, building the infrastructure the Marianas needs to replace what was destroyed by Super Typhoon Yutu and to prepare to withstand future storms made more likely by climate change.

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Games, extra flights set for Tinian Hot Pepper Festival

A full weekend of games and competition is set for 18th Annual Tinian Hot Pepper Festival on March 11-13, 2022.

The festival will have a soft opening from 6am to 11pm on Friday, March 11, at the Fiesta Grounds in San Jose, Tinian, adjacent to Jones Beach. On Saturday and Sunday, March 12 and 13, live entertainment and competitions will be held from 5am to 11pm.

Competitions for Saturday include the preliminary rounds of the beach volleyball tournament and hot pepper eating for women. Competitions for Sunday include the championship round of the Beach Volleyball Tournament, "estufao" (very spicy chicken) cooking, "umang" (hermit crab) race for children, tug of war, sack race, "mwar" (floral head lei) making, hot pepper eating for men, and cha-cha. Vendors will also compete for the best decorated booth.

The festival, affectionately knowns as "Pika Fest" among locals ("pika" means spicy), pays homage to Tinian's small but famous "donne sali" hot pepper and includes a full weekend of activities including food sales, live entertainment, competitions, arts and crafts sales, and more.

"We're looking forward to another extraordinary Tinian Hot Pepper Festival this weekend and invite everyone to join us in enjoying the beauty and warmth of the community," said Marianas Visitors Authority managing director Priscilla M. Iakopo.

Star Marianas Air has announced that they will be adding additional aircraft on the Saipan-Tinian route and extending their scheduled flights during the weekend. On March 11 and 12 the last flights will leave Tinian at 9:30pm. Flights leave Saipan hourly at the top the hour (starting at 8am) and leave Tinian at the bottom of the hour. Reservations are required for any flight departing after 6pm on festival weekend and are also recommended for flights operating within normal business hours from 8am to 5:30pm. Reservations can be made by calling (670) 433-9996/7/8. A shuttle between Tinian International Airport and the festival grounds will be available by calling (670) 2869367. Shuttle service will also be provided between the Port of Tinian and the festival grounds for arriving and departing ferries.

MVA

File photo shows Ricardo Carrazco of the United States chomping his way through 100 "donne sali" peppers on Feb. 13, 2021, to win first place in the Hot Pepper Eating Contest (Male Category) during the 17th Annual Tinian Hot Pepper Festival in San Jose, Tinian.

Ferry seats are still available on: March 12, departing Tinian at 12pm and departing Saipan at 4pm; March 13, departing Saipan at 8am and departing Tinian at 6pm; and March 14, departing Tinian at 5pm. The Super Emerald ferry will depart from the Commonwealth Ports Authority dock in Lower Base, passengers and must check in one hour before departure. Thirty- five passengers are allowed per ferry, and household pets are also allowed.

Ferry round trip cost is $15 for ages 3-11, $30 for ages 12 and older, and free for children ages 0-2. For one way, the cost is $10 for ages 3-11, $18 for ages 12 and older, and free for children ages 0-2. Advance ticket purchase is required and will be accommodated on a first come, first served basis. Ticket purchases may be made at the MVA office on Tinian or Saipan. Cash payments only will be accepted.

Exclusive platinum sponsors for this year's festival are Tan Holdings Corp. and Tan Sui Lin Foundation, gold sponsors are Bank of Guam and IT&E, and bronze sponsor is McDonald's Saipan. The Pika Fishing Derby silver sponsors are Triple J Bar K and Tinian Shipping Co.

The 50K Pika Bike Race will begin at 6am on March 12 at the Fiesta Grounds. Registration is $40. For a registration form or more information on the 50K Pika Bike Race, contact Alex Gozon at alexgozon@yahoo.com or (670) 234-2665. Registration forms and payment may be submitted at The Bike Shop in Courtney's Plaza on Beach Road in Chalan Kanoa, Saipan.

Temporary restrooms and showers will be installed at Jones Beach for the use of festival goers and campers.

For more information, contact Tinian Field Operations supervisor Vida Borja at 433-9365 or e-mail at vborja@mymarianas.com or MVA Community Projects specialist Jack Aranda at (670) 664-3200 or email jaranda@mymarianas.com. ***(MVA)***

Power service interruption on Friday

There will be a scheduled power service interruption on Friday, March 11, 2022, from 12:30pm to 4pm.

The first momentary outage (12:30pm to 1pm and 3:30pm to 4pm) will affect portions of Route 31- Isa Drive in San Vicente (San Vicente Church, San Vicente Loop, Atkiya Dr., Tuturan Drive, Bentana Dr., Katbon Rd. and San Vicente Elementary School).

The second momentary outage (3:30pm to 4pm) will affect Route 305 Dandan Road (residentials at Mwaremwar Ave., Sirena Ave., Tenda Ave., Dandan Elementary School, Sailing Dr., Adios P1. and Fishin P1.).

There will be a complete outage from 12:30pm to 4pm, affecting Jesus Is Lord Church, Dandan Bakery and Kattan Hudda Drive.

These outages will allow the Commonwealth Utilities Corp. to replace a 45-foot wooden primary power pole with a concrete power pole and to remove and re-install the airbrake switch adjacent to the San Vicente traffic lights.

The SV-7 water well will be affected but water services to the areas will not be affected. No wastewater facility will be affected. ***(CUC)***

NORTHERN MARIANAS HOUSING CORPORATION

P.O. BOX 500514, Saipan, MP 96950-0514 | Email: nmhc@nmhc.gov.mp | Website: http://www.nmhcgov.net

Tels: (670) 234-9447, 234-6866, 234-7670
Fax: (670) 234-9021

NOTICE OF FUNDING AVAILABILITY OF COMMUNITY PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT FUNDS FOR PROGRAM YEAR 2022

THIS ADVERTISEMENT IS PAID FOR BY NMHC WITH CPD FUNDS.

The Government of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, **through the** Northern Marianas Housing Corporation (NMHC) is announcing the availability of an **estimated** $1,514,000.00 in Community Planning and Development (CPD) funds available from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. NMHC anticipates receiving an estimated amount of $970,416.00 in Community Development Block Grants (CDBG); $463,940.00 in Home Investment Partnerships (HOME); and, $79,644.00 in Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG) funds for Program Year (PY) 2022.

The CDBG funds, authorized under Title I of the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974, may be used for a wide range of community development activities to revitalize neighborhoods, provide affordable housing, expand economic opportunities, and improve community facilities and services. However, use of these funds must meet at least one of the national objectives which include: 1) to benefit low and moderate-income families; 2) to eliminate slum or blight conditions; or 3) to meet other urgent community development needs.

The CDBG program requires a grant recipient to certify that it will minimize displacement of persons as a result of activities assisted with CDBG funds. The CNMI government does not plan on undertaking any activity which will cause displacement of persons. In the event of any unforeseen displacement resulting from any CDBG funded activity, the CNMI government will comply with the requirements of the Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970, its implementing regulation and applicable local law.

HOME funds may be used to create affordable housing through financing assistance, site acquisition or improvement, and rehabilitating existing residential dwellings as well as providing funds for new construction or purchase of a single-family residential dwelling. Use of HOME funds must benefit low-income families.

ESG funds may be used to rehabilitate or convert to buildings into homeless shelters and for shelter operating expenses, supportive services and homeless prevention and rapid re-housing activities. Use of ESG funds must benefit the homeless.

You may access the CPD applications on the NMHC website at www.nmhcgov.net by selecting the "Public Notice/Announcement" menu tab, beginning February 03, 2022.

Applications must be submitted to the NMHC Offices in Garapan, Saipan (Saipan Applicants); NMC Campus, Building A (Tinian Applicants); and, Songsong Village, Rota (Rota Applicants) by ***May 04, 2022, no later than 4:30 p.m. Applications submitted after May 04, 2022, will not be accepted.***

A briefing will be conducted for interested applicants and for those applicants who have picked up an application for the use of CPD funds. The briefing will address the program requirements and regulations concerning the usage of CPD funds.

The schedules for briefing are as follows:

March 14, 2022, 6:00 p.m. for the island of Saipan
March 15, 2022, 6:00 p.m. for the island of Tinian
March 16, 2022, 6:00 p.m. for the island of Rota

We are encouraging all non-profit, for profit, and government service providers who are providing services to people with disabilities, homeless individuals, and emergency shelter administrators and operators to attend this briefing.

For residents living on the island of Saipan, the briefing will held at the NMHC Office in Garapan; Residents living on the island of Tinian, the briefing will be held at the NMHC Office in San Jose Village; and Residents living on the island of Rota, the briefing will be held at the Rota Mayor's Office Conference Room in Tatachog.

Accommodations for disabled individuals or other non-English speaking individuals who wish to attend the briefing are available upon request by giving at least 24 hours notice prior to the meeting so that such needs can be arranged and provided.

Additional inquiries, concerning the CPD program, may be directed to Ms. Zenie P. Mafnas, Deputy Corporate Director or Ms. Tricia Tenorio, Planner at 234-6866 or 234-9447.

/s/ Jesse S. Palacios
Corporate Director

JOB VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

Accountant – JMC-2022-02, Saipan, CNMI

ACCOUNTANT,
Joeten Motor Company, Inc., Saipan, CNMI

Overall in-charge of the accounting and administrative operations of the Company. Report to the management regarding the finances of the Company. Formulate and implement office policies and procedures for the entire operations of the Company. Prepare, examine, and analyze accounting records, financial statements, or other financial reports to assess accuracy, completeness, and in conformity to reporting and general accepted accounting principle (GAAP) acceptable to the United States. Prepare company budget and monitoring budget versus actual expenses. Performs General Ledger posting, reconciliation, prepare balance sheet schedule on a monthly basis, such as preparation of Fixed assets lapsing schedule, pre-payments, accruals of expenses. Compiles Financial Statements in conformity with auditors requirements. Calculate CNMI and federal government taxes on a monthly, quarterly and annual basis. Prepares individual and corporate income tax returns for the Company. Responds to CNMI Revenue and IRS letters and prepares necessary documents needed to correct and comply tax filing. Prepares recommendations to the top management, with regards to meeting company budget, cost cutting measures, and help in the implementation of company set policies.

Minimum Requirements: Bachelor's degree in Accounting, Finance, or related field, foreign educational equivalent accepted, plus 2 years experience in general accounting functions. Able to supervise accounting and administrative staff. Knowledge in preparing Financial Statement in conformity with Generally Accepted Accounting Principle (GAAP). Good oral and communication skills. Good interpersonal qualities.

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IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

Juan Taitano	] FCD-DI CIVIL
	] ACTION NO.
	] 22-0070
-vs-	]
	]
	]
Li Taitano	]
Respondent,	]
_____	]

SUMMONS FOR PUBLICATION

TO THE ABOVE-NAMED RESPONDENT: LI TAITANO

YOU ARE HEREBY SUMMONED and notified to file any answer you wish to make to the Complaint, a copy of which is on file with the Court, within thirty (30) days after service of the Summons upon you, and to deliver or mail a copy of your answer to the Petitioner whose address is P.O. Box 501698 Saipan, MP 96950 as soon as practical after filing your answer or sending it to the Clerk of Courts for filing.

Your answer should be in writing and filed with the Clerk of this Court at Susupe, Saipan, MP 96950. It may be prepared for you by your counsel and sent to the Clerk of this Court by messenger or Mail. It is not necessary for you to appear personally until further notice. If you fail to file and answer in accordance with this Summons, Judgement by Default may be taken against you for relief in the Complaint.

Dated this 18th day of February, 2022.

/s/Clerk of Court

Zero arrest for marijuana possession from 2019 to 2022

From 2019 to 2022, which covers the period when marijuana was legalized in the Commonwealth, there has been zero arrest or detainment for possession of marijuana.

In a presentation about the CNMI Cannabis Commission and the cannabis industry before the House Committee on Cannabis, managing director Monique Sablan disclosed Tuesday that, based on information she received from the Department of Corrections, three people were arrested and detained for possession of marijuana in 2015 or before the marijuana legalization.

She said she truly believes that the zero arrest has a lot to do with the commission's part in ensuring that law enforcement officers are fully aware of the penalties and fines as specified in the Cannabis Act for non-licensing related crimes such as smoking in the presence of a minor, importing or exporting marijuana, use of marijuana while driving, and unlawful delivery of marijuana.

Sablan

Marijuana trafficking has a fine of up to $40,000 and 10 years of imprisonment.

"So they're very hefty fines, very lengthy imprisonment terms and we want to ensure that our officers who are leading the frontlines are very aware," Sablan said.

Sablan said she conduct the Cannabis Act enforcement training in conjunction with Chief Prosecutor Chester Hinds from the Office of the Attorney General Criminal Division.

She said they tried to do this presentation for law enforcers back in 2020, but with the COVID-19 protocols, they were not able to reach the audience.

"The Cannabis Act is very specific. It says that we need to work together, which is what we're trying to do in this cannabis enforcement training—to establish educational resources for our law enforcement frontliners," she said.

Sablan said they are doing their first two rounds of training session with DPS frontline officers and supervisors on March 17 and 18, and they are also looking at working with the Drug Enforcement Task Force. This April, they're focusing mainly on the frontliners of the Division of Customs.

Sablan said they will be focusing on Tinian and Rota in May. ***(Ferdie de la Torre)***

Hawaii set to lift last US state mask mandate by March 26

HONOLULU (AP)—The last statewide mask mandate in the U.S. will be lifted by March 26, Hawaii Gov. David Ige announced Tuesday.

Ide

No states will require masks indoors after 11:59 p.m. March 25. Hawaii is the last to drop the pandemic safety measure, with indoor mask mandates in Oregon and Washington state expiring at 11:59 p.m. Friday.

Ige said Hawaii's COVID-19 case counts and hospitalizations are decreasing. The seven-day new case average is about 140, he said, while a week ago it was more than 300. There were 48 patients hospitalized with COVID-19 on Tuesday. He said that's the first time the number has been under 50 since around last summer.

He said he expects the downward trends to continue.

Since April 2020, the state of Hawaii has required face masks. At first, it was both indoors and outdoors.

Ige, a Democrat, said Hawaii's culture of caring for others, especially kupuna, or older people in Hawaiian, helped the state tolerate the mask rule for so long.

"I do believe that we are the last community to release the mask mandate because we care about each other and we care about our community and we are all willing to sacrifice to keep each other healthy and safe," he said.

Hawaii health officials still recommend wearing masks indoors at schools, hospitals, prisons and other "congregate living settings."

Sen. Kurt Fevella, the lone Republican in the state Senate, said he gives credit to the governor for not lifting the mandate sooner, even though he knows many of his constituents are ready to take their masks off.

"People would come up to me and tell me to take the diaper off my face," Fevella said. "People being rude and disrespectful ... doesn't help anybody."

When people make those kinds of comments, he explains that he wears a mask to protect his 83-year-old father who lives with him.

He said when the mandate ends, he and his family members will continue wearing masks depending on the circumstances.

"If we don't know the crowd we're with, we'll wear the mask," he said.

The end of the mask mandate coincides with when Hawaii plans to lift its COVID-19 quarantine requirement for travelers. Starting March 26 those arriving from other places in the U.S. won't have to show proof of vaccination or a negative test to avoid sequestering themselves for five days.

Ige said these rules have contributed to Hawaii having among the lowest rates of COVID-19 in the country.

CNMI DIVISION OF PROCUREMENT SERVICES
CNMI GOVERNMENT

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS
RFP22-DCCA-CCDF-42200077

SUBMISSION DATE: MARCH 23, 2022 TIME: 9:00 A.M.

"TO DEVELOP AND IMPLEMENT A SYSTEM OF SUPPORT FOR CCDF'S FAMILY CHILD CARE PROGRAM, INCLUDING LICENSE-EXEMPT FAMILY, FRIEND, OR NEIGHBOR (LEFFN) AND LICENSED HOME-BASED PROVIDERS"

COPIES OF THE SPECIFICATIONS MAY BE OBTAINED AT THE OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR OF PROCUREMENT SERVICES, LOCATED AT THE HORIGUCHI BLDG., GROUND FLOOR, 123 KOPPA DI ORU & BEACH ROAD, GARAPAN, DURING REGULAR WORKING HOURS.

A MANDATORY PRE-PROPOSAL CONFERENCE WILL BE HELD. DUE TO THE PANDEMIC, CCDF WILL CONDUCT THE PRE-PROPOSAL CONFERENCE VIRTUALLY AT **1:30 P.M.** ON **MARCH 11, 2022**. THE CALENDAR INVITE AND LINK WILL BE PROVIDED BY THE CCDF OFFICE USING THE EMAIL PROVIDED BY THE PROPOSER TO PROCUREMENT.

QUESTIONS REGARDING THIS RFP SHALL BE SUBMITTED TO **MS. MARIBEL S.D. LOSTE, PROGRAM ADMINISTRATOR**, VIA EMAIL TO mloste.cnmiccdf@gmail.com OR VIA FACSIMILE TO **(670) 664-2547 NO LATER THAN THE CLOSE OF BUSINESS ON MARCH 4, 2022.** ALL QUESTIONS SHALL BE SHARED WITH ALL PROPOSERS.

THE PROVISIONS OF THE CNMI PROCUREMENT REGULATIONS, NMIAC SECTION 70-30.3-725 AND 70-30.3-730 PROHIBITING GRATUITIES, KICKBACKS AND CONTINGENT FEES SHALL APPLY.

THE CNMI GOVERNMENT RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY OR ALL BIDS, OR PORTIONS THEREOF, AND WAIVE IMMATERIAL DEFECTS IF TO DO SO WOULD BE IN THE BEST INTEREST OF THE CNMI GOVERNMENT.

/S/ JOSEPH P. DELEON GUERRERO
SECRETARY, DCCA

/S/ FRANCISCO C. AGUON
ACTING DIRECTOR, P&S

Commonwealth Utilities Corporation
Board of Directors Standing Committees
Personnel and Operations Committees
3rd Floor, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building
P.O. Box 501220 CK • Saipan, MP 96950-1220
Tel: (670) 664-4282 • Facsimile: (670) 235-5131

PUBLIC NOTICE

Pursuant to the Open Government Act (1 CMC §9901 et seq), the Commonwealth Utilities Corporation ("CUC") Board of Directors informs the general public that the Personnel and Operations Standing Committee will meet on Tuesday, March 15, 2022, at 10:30 a.m., and Wednesday, March 16 , 2022, at 9:30 a.m., at the CUC Rota Conference Room.

AGENDA

I. PRELIMINARY MATTERS
- A. Call to Order
- B. Roll Call
- C. Adoption of Agenda
- D. Introduction
  1. CUC Board of Directors
  2. CUC Management
- E. Mayor and Cabinet Members

II. OLD BUSINESS
- A. Presentation
  1. Personnel Standing Committee
     a. Human Resources
        1. Power Point Presentation
        2. Questions and Answers

III. New Business
- A. Orientation
  1. Operations Standing Committee
     a. Tours

IV. Public Comments **

V. Executive Session***

VI. Announcements

VII. Adjournment /Recess

* In accordance with Public Law 8-41, additional agenda items maybe added to the above listing by a recorded vote of the majority members of the governing body.
** All interested persons are welcome to attend, and submit written and oral testimony on the above-agenda items. Public Comments are limited to 30 minutes and each remark is limited to three minutes.
*** Pursuant to 1 CMC §9912, the CUC Board of Directors may vote to meet at any time in executive session, in consultation with the Legal Counsel on matters deemed privileged and confidential.

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- **Friday, March 18th** 9:00am - 4:00pm

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Jennifer Ross, BC-HIS
Board Certified in Hearing Instrument Sciences
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Ross Hearing Aids

All interested patients should call Marianas Medical Clinic for scheduling

234-3925/7

Insurance accepted: AETNA and Medicaid

Opinion

Hafa Adai!
Saipan Tribune
THE CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER
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The Associated Press | Pacific Islands News Association

EDITORIAL

Sanctions aren't an extension of cancel culture. They are the best option in a sea of lousy choices

Two broad perspectives have emerged as the civilized world tries to figure out how to respond to the inhumanities perpetrated on Ukraine by the war criminal Vladimir Putin.

One argument counsels restraint and containment in any NATO or other Western action against Putin. Localized aggressors have created bloody massacres before in Yemen, Syria and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (to name but three) this thinking goes. What matters most here is negotiation and containment, especially given the Russian president's aggressive state and his military's formidable arsenal of nuclear weapons.

No-fly zones, boots on the ground and other forms of direct military intervention, while tempting in the face of human suffering and pleas for help, risk catastrophic escalation that could destroy much of the planet.

The counterargument often draws on the analogy of the early years of Adolf Hitler, when the world failed to act quickly enough to stop his fascist rout of Europe, thus failing to stop unconscionable subsequent loss of life, including the victims of the Holocaust. If Putin is not stopped in Ukraine, this thinking goes, he likely will be emboldened to encroach on other sovereign nations and, perhaps even worse, other authoritarian regimes, such as China, watching Putin's success, will be tempted to follow his model in other disputed territorial regions, such as Taiwan.

As British Prime Minister Boris Johnson wrote over the weekend: "Vladimir Putin's act of aggression must fail and be seen to fail." Otherwise, consequences will be dire for the whole world.

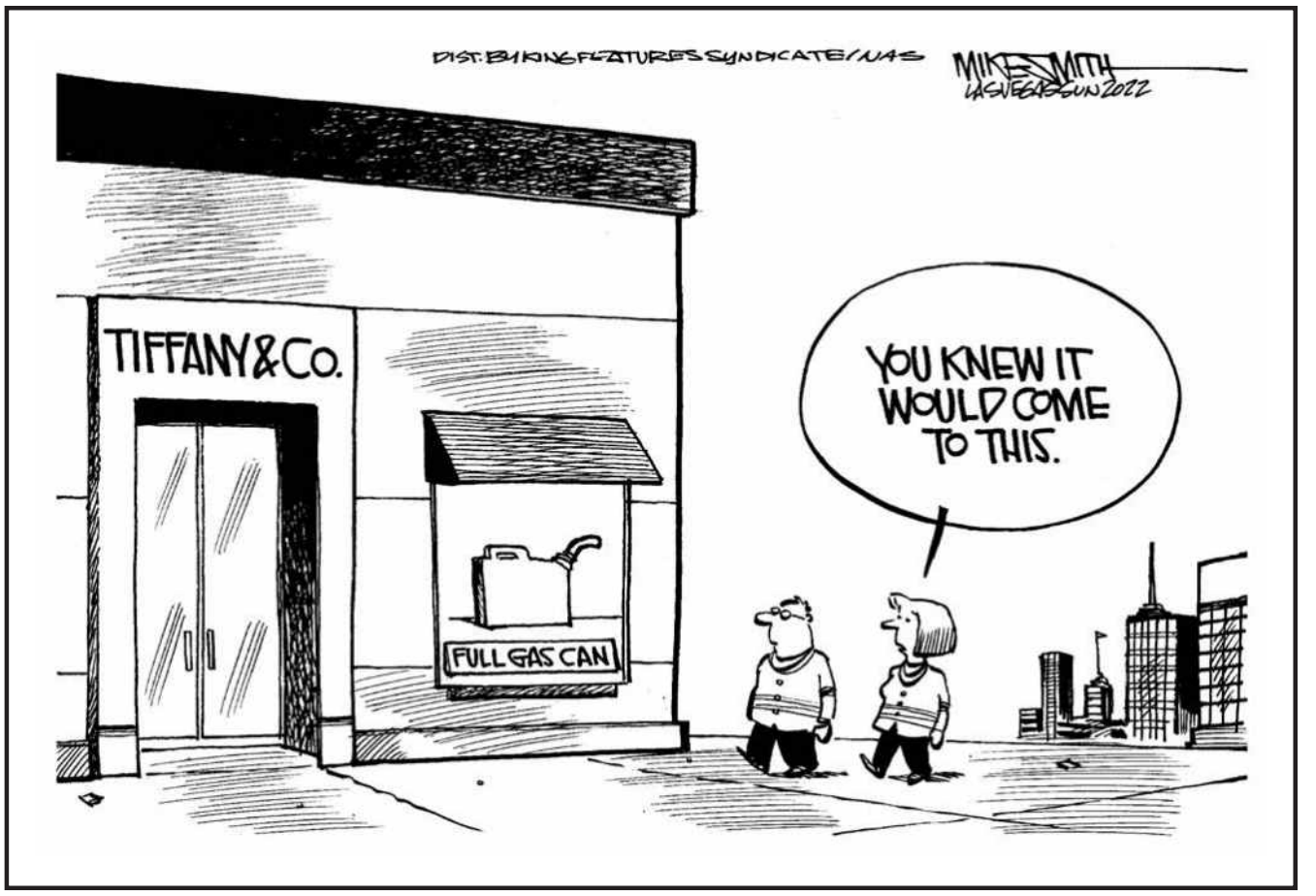
Most politicians are vacillating between these two points of view. This is unsurprising, since they cannot read the future, and both theories risk consequences that would have been unfathomable just weeks ago.

Most Americans are doing the same as they talk around the dinner table. This is agonizing dilemma for decent people, as it is for editorial boards. It is easier to grab an oligarch's yacht, source your vodka from Finland or fire the Putin-sympathizing diva from the Metropolitan Opera.

Sanctions on an epic level are tricky, complicated and can cause collateral damage. But in the face of what is going on in Ukraine, they are the world's best option.

The danger, of course, is that the canceling of Premier League soccer, the closing of designer stores and the gen-

See SANCTIONS on Next Page



Ukrainian courage shames the cowards of the Republican Party

By KEVIN MCDERMOTT
St. Louis Post-Dispatch

A new hero to many Americans today is a man whose name they may have trouble pronouncing. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy's bold stand against Russia's invasion has shown many of us what courage in leaders looks like.

Meanwhile, one of our own leaders, top House Republican Kevin McCarthy, recently darted from TV cameras like a startled cat rather than publicly criticize a member of his caucus for speaking at a white nationalist gathering where a crowd of supposed Americans chanted its support for Russian autocrat Vladimir Putin.

For those keeping score at home, McCarthy's refusal to call out this kind of evil for fear of offending the extremists in his party is the opposite of courage. It's called cowardice—and it's a defining characteristic of elected Republicans today.

It began two weekends ago, when Rep. Marjorie Taylor Greene, R-Lunatic, spoke at an event organized by Nicholas Fuentes. He is a well-known white nationalist organizer who the FBI has dubbed a white supremacist. Greene, the Georgia congresswoman, nonetheless claims never to have heard of him when she agreed to speak at his event.

Even if we accept the premise that Greene was utterly ignorant about the background of her controversial host (in fairness, ignorance is probably always a believable defense for Greene), she might want to claim deafness as well. Just before she spoke, Fuentes bragged to his crowd about "our secret sauce here, it's these young white men." He noted that people are "going on about Russia and 'Vladimir Putin is Hitler,'" then mused: "They say that's not a good thing." He asked for and got "a round of applause for Russia." The crowd then broke into a chant of "Putin! Putin! Putin!"

All this as Greene waited to take the stage, ostensibly not noticing the beer hall putsch going on around her.

What strange times we're in. I'm old enough to remember when those on the political right prided themselves on rock-ribbed resistance against foreign adversaries, Russia chief among them. Actually, anyone older than about 8 is old enough to remember that. As with so much of the GOP's dysfunction today, this weird new Russia-coddling thing among a lot of self-proclaimed conservatives can be traced in a straight line right back to former President Donald Trump.

(And let's pause here for all the moaning and groaning from those who just can't believe we're still talking about the only U.S. president who ever tried to stay in power after being voted out, and who still leads a toxic nationalist movement that could very well return him to power, and which, in turn, could very well mean the end of American democracy. But, but, but—Hunter Biden!)

Zelenskyy, Ukraine's 44-year-old president, is the same leader who then-President Trump tried to strong-arm for campaign help in 2019, holding U.S. military aid over his head. No one who impartially watched the resulting impeachment trial could reasonably doubt that Trump deserved removal from office. Yet almost every congressional Republican stood by him—not out of loyalty, most of them, but out of cowering terror that he would tweet something nasty and sic his base on them if they tried to hold him accountable.

Now the leader of the U.S. ally they betrayed along with their oaths is standing courageously against Russia's invasion, while the top House Republican doesn't have the borscht to stand up to a bunch of Putin-loving skinheads and a deranged congresswoman.

McCarthy initially told two reporters in an off-camera hallway conversation that the appearance at the white nationalist event by Greene—along with a video message to the gathering from Rep. Paul Gosar, R-Wacko—was "unacceptable." Apparently not that unacceptable, though, since McCarthy later declined repeatedly to discuss the issue in front of media cameras, at one point

See UKRAINIAN on Next Page

EDITORIAL POLICY Letters to the editor must include the NAME, VILLAGE ADDRESS, and CONTACT NUMBER of the contributor. Letters that do not have these information will immediately be trashed. Contributions consisting of 500 words or less have more chances of getting published. The *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to publish a contribution or not; the right to edit submissions for length, accuracy, and clarity; and the right to publish and distribute contributions in print, electronic, or other media formats. Submissions may be sent via snail mail to the 2nd Floor, JP Center, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan, 96950; fax (670) 235-3740; e-mail to editor@saipantribune.com; or through our website at www.saipantribune.com.

The great inflation scam

By WENONAH HAUTER
Progressive Perspectives

Wenonah Hauter is the executive director of the national advocacy group Food & Water Watch.

It's not just you: All across the country, it costs more to heat our homes, fill up our gas tanks and feed our families. This has prompted waves of tedious finger-pointing among pundits, economists and political opportunists. Some say President Joe Biden is to blame for this wave of inflation, while others warn that Democrats should be careful not to exaggerate how much power big corporations have to set prices.

All of this hot air doesn't change anything for working people who are getting squeezed, and it lets these powerful companies off the hook by suggesting that their brazen profiteering is just as natural as the change of seasons. The truth is that when it comes to some key parts of our economy—food and fuel, for example—a handful of megacorporations are calling the shots, and that's costing all of us dearly.

Dominant players in the food industry were well-known long before this pandemic profiteering. In a report last fall, Food & Water Watch examined the market share of the dominant companies across 55 grocery categories, everything from vegetable side dishes to milk and yogurt. We found that just four companies account for three-quarters of all yogurt sales, three companies control most of the baby formula market, and PepsiCo captures nearly 90% of all dip sales.

That's the power to effectively name your price. And over the past two years, amid a deadly pandemic, corporate powers did just that. The cost to feed a family of four increased by one-third over this period, while beef, pork and poultry prices rose between 20% and 30%.

Energy costs grew 20%, and the price of gasoline was up 30%. It's no coincidence that corporate profits in those sectors are soaring. While we dealt with the lingering effects of a debilitating pandemic, these companies were soaking consumers and shoveling money to executives and shareholders, while stiffing many of their workers in the process.

Oil and gas giant ExxonMobil posted a profit of almost $9 billion in the fourth quarter of last year alone, and $23 billion for all of 2021. Profits for the top grocery chains and food companies were similar. Tyson Foods—one of the four companies that control the U.S. beef market—posted astonishing returns that are prompting some long overdue government scrutiny.

In December, the White House released an analysis showing that the meat processing giants have seen the pandemic as a chance to plunder: Gross profits increased more than 120% since before COVID-19, with net income surging 500%.

Many of these companies will tell you that costs are increasing because workers are expensive and supply chain disruptions make it hard to get materials. But they tell a different story to their investors. Tyson, for instance, explained on one earnings call that its price hikes go beyond the additional costs it is incurring. And wages across many parts of these industries remained stagnant.

That is all music to the ears of Wall Street investors—and it should enrage the rest of us. So what can be done about it? The White House has, in fits and starts, begun to lay out a domestic plan to curb the powers of monopolists, especially in the food business.

But what U.S. consumers need is real action. We need food policies that reward farmers who have been shortchanged by monopolistic meat giants for decades, and we need to build resilient local economies based on shared prosperity for all.

Two Slices of Virtues and Vices

On his list of 13 Virtues Benjamin Franklin's comment on Humility was short and to the point: "Imitate Jesus and Socrates."

Our Capability for Humility

Do you have a capability for humility
most have this virtue as a possibility
it depends on our own individuality
and the mentality of your own reality
diminished pride will increase integrity
up front congeniality is a positive quality
kindness to others increases the ability
to practice humility's nascent durability

Sometimes when practicing humility mumble
and let your false pride and big ego crumble
as humility and pride get mixed in a jumble
for wise answers or comments we fumble
from birth to death we often take a tumble
as through life's immensities we stumble.

Pride Goes Before a Fall

"Pride goeth before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall."—Proverbs 16:18

As to what kind of false pride we must abide
who will take an intelligent yet a homely bride
over acne pimples how many teens have cried
who is more handsome families can't decide
for top grade point average how many brains fried

what does a pure soul look like from inside
with dyed blonde hair was her bust amplified
with sagging skin and gray hair was he horrified
does he call their separation a Great Divide
hide embarrassment behind a thick macho hide
too proud to admit denial when world's collide
pleased as punch when his position is glorified
says I can hold my booze when he's pie-eyed
in his humility torpor rules, and he is terrified.

LITERARY NOOK
By JOEY 'PEPE BATBON' CONNOLLY
Special to the Saipan Tribune

Joey aka Pepe Batbon is a retired educator who taught in the CNMI, NOLA, and LVNV. He is a sonnet practitioner who enjoys stargazing.

SANCTION

From Page 8

eral, sudden de-Westernization of Russia and its people sends that country into the hands of China, which has not joined with the West in objecting to the "special military operation in," aka the invasion of, Ukraine.

That's already happening with credit-card processing. After Visa and Mastercard announced they would no longer guarantee Russian cards working abroad, many of the affected rushed to replace the contents of their wallet with a Chinese card.

Then there is the unpleasant spectacle of trying to discern which Russian individuals deserve to be personally punished because of their views. The opera world currently is consumed with this thorny debate, arguing over the morality of becoming the thought police in determining who is or is not a Putin sympathizer and, yet worse, insisting on Orwellian statements of repudiation before the first aria is sung. Not an attractive job for the general director of an opera company, and no fun for those in the crosshairs.

Better though, let's remember, than being holed up in a bunker in Ukraine with your kids. Or lying dead on the ground while attempting to evacuate.

Still, while the broad insistence in London that the Russian billionaire Roman Abramovich divest himself from owning the soccer powerhouse Chelsea has received little opposition, it's important to remember that he didn't work alone. Oligarchs have employees, their yachts have non-Russian crews, their Manhattan realtors have bills to pay and myriad other innocents suffer.

This situation is the sole responsibility of Putin, not the West. Period.

Sanctions cannot be cancellations. The sanctions must not be viewed through the same lens as the performative congressional "freedom fries" debacle in 2003 after France opposed the U.S. invasion of Iraq. That was mere posturing. And there is no logic to covering up the abstract work of Wassily Kandinsky, refusing to listen to the symphonies of Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky, throwing Anton Chekhov plays out of the theater, or demanding of ordinary Russians, living under an authoritarian regime with long tentacles, that they publicly state their politics on pain of personal ruin.

But, no, cruise ships should not now be calling in St. Petersburg. Washington should move ahead with banning Russian oil from coming into America. Netflix should not be filming comedies in Russia. Aeroflot should not be allowed to land at O'Hare International Airport, nor should any of the big international consulting firms be working for Putin or his pals. And who can drink Russian vodka in good conscience right now when other options are available that taste much the same?

Sanctions are imperfect and imperfectly targeted. If and when Putin is gone, they should be removed. The post-invasion economic recovery of a Russia without Putin will be in everyone's interest.

But that is not the situation now. This is not an ordinary military incursion or territorial dispute: Putin is targeting civilians and killing children in Ukraine. Strategy is important but so is our basic morality as human beings. We cannot merely stand by as the people of Ukraine suffer.

Sanctions are the very least we can do to help end this brutal period of global history. Russians must understand we mean them no harm and that we are always at the negotiating table alongside the brave people of Ukraine.

But end it, we must. Together.

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UKRAINIAN

From Page 8

abruptly walking away from them.

Zelenskyy is pinned down in Kyiv, predicting his own death but defiantly rallying his country to stand firm, while McCarthy can't make his mouth say the words Rep. Greene shouldn't have spoken to that racist, pro-Putin gathering while cameras are rolling. Among the questions McCarthy hadn't answered by mid-week was whether the party that just ex-communicated two of its House members for having the audacity to investigate the Jan. 6 attack on the Capitol should take similarly strong action against two other members who played footsie with pro-Russia traitors and neo-Nazi creeps.

This is notable because, though McCarthy's Lion-from-The-Wizard-of-Oz-like cowardice regarding Trump has been well-documented, this event wasn't specifically about Trump. (That is, beyond the involvement of white supremacists, who of course adore the former president.)

So Trump's cowardice-inspiring effects on elected Republicans have apparently spread, cancer-like, to topics beyond Trump himself. It's no longer enough to make sure you aren't stepping directly on The Orange One's delicate ego. Now you also have to make sure you aren't offending any people, groups or events even loosely aligned with the MAGA fringe. If you're a Republican House leader hoping to become House speaker next year, that means treading lightly around a nut-case congresswoman and her white-supremacist goons.

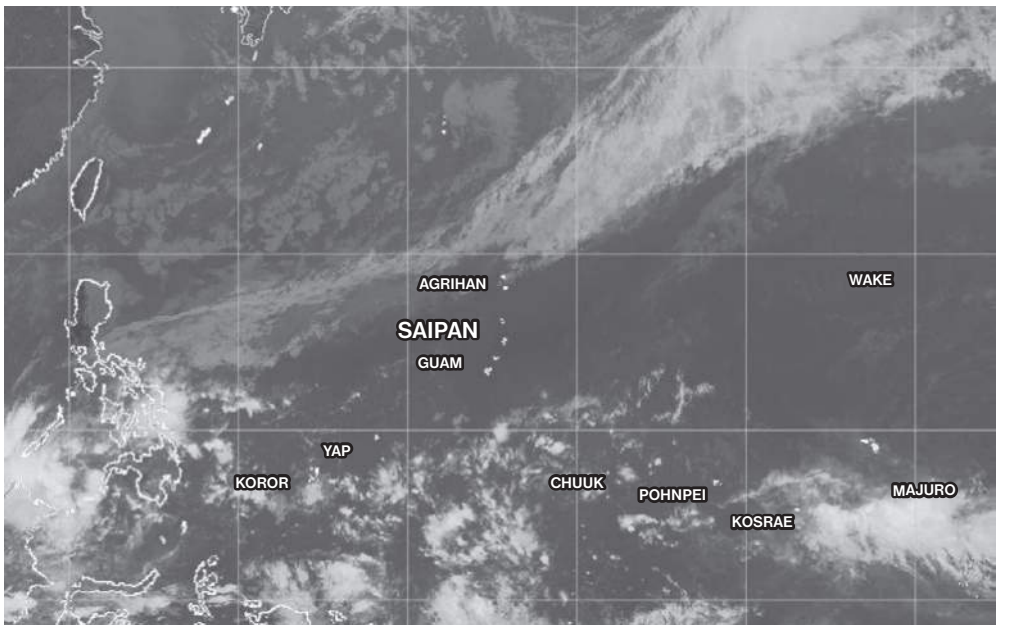
So the next time you see footage of President Zelenskyy (still alive at this writing, but by the time you read this, who knows?), by all means, let his courage inspire you. But don't expect to find even a pale shadow of it in what used to be considered America's party of patriotism.

The Weather

5-DAY FORECAST FOR SAIPAN AND TINIAN

FRIDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY	MONDAY
Mostly cloudy with scattered showers. Northeast winds 10 to 15 mph	Breezy. Mostly cloudy with scattered showers. Northeast winds 20 to 25 mph.	Breezy friday night. Mostly cloudy with a chance of showers and a slight chance of thunderstorms.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers.	Mostly cloudy with isolated showers.
86º 78º	84º 75	85º 75º	86º 75º	85º 76º

YESTERDAY'S SATELLITE IMAGE



PICTURE TIME: 6:40 AM, WEDNESDAY, MARCH 9, 2022

Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

Gentle trade winds are becoming light later today, giving a chance for island showers to develop in the afternoon. Ipan buoy indicates seas between 4 and 5 feet.

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam homepage: www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/

MICRONESIA		▲ ▼ °F
Guam and Rota	Partly Cloudy	30 / 25 °F
Palau	Thunderstorms	29 / 26 °F
Yap	Scattered Thunderstorms	29 / 26 °F
Chuuk	Thunderstorms	29 / 25 °F
Pohnpei	Thunderstorms	29 / 25 °F
Kosrae	Thunderstorms	29 / 26 °F
Majuro	Mostly Sunny	29 / 27 °F

DAY	SUNRISE	SUNSET
Today	06:28 AM	18:26 PM
Friday	06:27 AM	18:26 PM
Saturday	06:27 AM	18:26 PM
Sunday	06:26 AM	18:26 PM
Monday	06:25 AM	18:26 PM

DAY	MOONRISE	MOONSET	MOONRISE
Today	-	00:05 PM	11:33
Friday	-	00:57 PM	11:33
Saturday	-	01:49 PM	10:30
Sunday	-	01:39 PM	14:02
Monday	-	03:28 PM	14:56

AROUND THE GLOBE		▲ ▼ °F
Auckland	Partly Cloudy	24 / 18 °F
Beijing	Sunny	23 / 6 °F
Hong Kong	Mostly Sunny	22 / 18 °F
Honolulu	Mostly Sunny	28 / 22 °F
London	Mostly Sunny	13 / 10 °F
Los Angeles	Partly Cloudy	19 / 7 °F
Manila	Partly Cloudy	32 / 26 °F
Melbourne	Partly Cloudy	20 / 13 °F
Miami	Partly Cloudy	27 / 23 °F
New York	Partly Cloudy	10 / 1 °F
Osaka	Partly Cloudy	15 / 5 °F
Paris	Partly Cloudy	17 / 18 °F
Busan	Mostly Cloudy	17 / 6 °F
Rome	Sunny	16 / 8 °F
Salem	Partly Cloudy	18 / 2 °F
San Francisco	Sunny	15 / 1 °F
Seoul	AM Clouds/PM Sun	14 / 6°F
Tokyo	Cloudy	11 / 2 °F
Washington, DC	Partly Cloudy	15 / 8 °F

TIDES: SAIPAN HARBOR TODAY		FEET
02:16 AM	High Tide	1.35
06:53 AM	Low Tide	0.97
11:53 AM	High Tide	1.47
7:49 PM	Low Tide	0.15

STOP THE SPREAD

The Governor's COVID-19 Task Force and Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. continue to encourage residents within the Marianas to practice social distancing, which means avoiding close contact with people in order to avoid catching the virus yourself and to avoid passing it on to others.

■ Stay home as much as possible. Avoid unnecessary travel or public places.

■ Avoid social gatherings in groups of more than 10.

■ Choose drive-thru, take-out, or delivery options, or outdoor seating, if available, when dining in.

■ Send only one healthy adult from the household run necessary errands, such as getting groceries or picking up medications. Leave children, elderly, and other vulnerable people at home as much as possible. When returning home from an errand, wash your hands before doing anything else.

■ Older adults and people with chronic medical conditions are at higher risk of getting very sick from this illness. People at high risk should stay at home as much as possible.

■ Create a household plan of action, https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prepare/checklisthousehold-ready.html

■ Ensure a 30-day supply of all medicines.

Continue good hand hygiene

■ Wash your hands for at least 20 seconds with soap and water, avoid touching your face, cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue or your sleeve.

■ Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer if soap and water are not readily available.

Know the signs and symptoms of COVID-19 and what to do if you become symptomatic

■ Stay home when you are sick and if you recently traveled to a place with COVID-19. Self-quarantine means:

• Choosing a room in your house that can be used to separate sick household members from others.

• Washing your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.

• Avoiding touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.

• Limiting visitors

CHCC appreciates the patience and understanding of the community at this time. To obtain general information about the CNMI COVID-19 response, contact the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force Hotline at 287-0046, 287-0489, 287-1089. These numbers are available Monday to Sunday, 7:30am - 4:30pm.

For medical information about COVID-19, reach out to the COVID-19 Infoline at the following numbers: 285-1672/1352. These numbers are available Monday to Friday, 7:30am - 4:30pm.

For mental health support and helpful tips during a crisis, call the Mental Health Support Line at 285-1856, 323-6560, 323-6561 These numbers are available Monday to Friday, 7:30am - 4:30 pm. For the 24/7 Disaster Distress Helpline, call SAMSHA at 1-800-985-5990.

For more information about DIY face coverings, visit https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/cloth-face-cover.html

For more information about CHCC programs, follow CHCC on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter at @cnmichcc, check out our website at www.chcc.gov.mp or call us at (670) 234-8950.

For more information on the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force, visit www.governor.gov.mpand, follow @GovernorCNMI on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter.

This health advisory may be found online at http://www.chcc.gov.mp/pressrelease.html and at www.governor.gov.mp/covid-19.

Rumor control

During crises like this, oftentimes the spread of misinformation is just as dangerous as the virus itself. The CNMI is reminded to only share official and verified notices, press releases, and advisories from the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force and CHCC.

Source: Office of the Governor

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E-mail: sales@saipantribune.com

FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF FEBRUARY 14, 2022

DEPARTURES

SAIPAN-GUAM (GUM)

UA117	7:20am	8:05am	2, 4, 6
UA117	9:50am	10:35am	1, 3, 5, 7

GUAM-MANILA (MNL)

PR 111	6:30am	8:20am	1, 3, 5
UA183	8:00pm	9:50pm	Daily

SAIPAN-MANILA (MNL)

UA117/183	7:20am	9:50pm	2, 4, 6 via Guam
UA117/183	9:50am	9:50pm	1, 3, 5, 7 via Guam

SAIPAN-INCHEON (ICN)

7C3406	3:10PM	6:55PM	Every 4 days (Jan 29-Mar 30)
TW9308	3:30PM	7:20PM	4, 7
OZ6243	4:00PM	7:40PM	3, 6

SAIPAN-BUSAN (PUS)

BX621	3:10PM	6:30PM	7

ARRIVALS

GUAM (GUM)-SAIPAN

UA116	5:30am	6:16am	2, 4, 6
UA116	8:00am	8:46am	7
UA174	8:00am	8:46am	1, 3, 5

MANILA (MNL)-GUAM

PR110	10:15pm	4:00am+1	2, 4, 7
UA184	10:40pm	4:30am+1	2, 5
UA184	10:55pm	4:45am+1	1, 3, 4, 6, 7

MANILA (MNL)-SAIPAN

UA184/116	10:40pm	6:16am+1	5 via Guam
UA184/174	10:40pm	8:46am+1	2 via Guam
UA184/116	10:55pm	6:16am+1	1, 3 via Guam
UA184/174	10:55pm	8:46am+1	4, 7 via Guam
UA184/116	10:55pm	8:46am+1	6 via Guam

INCHEON (ICN)-SAIPAN

7C3405	8:30AM	2:10PM	Every 4 days (Jan 29-Mar 30)
TW9307	9:00AM	Q2:30PM	4, 7
OZ6233	9:00AM	2:30PM	3, 6

BUSAN (PUS)-SAIPAN

BX622	8:00AM	1:10PM	7

LEGEND: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); UA United Airlines; PR, Philippine Airlines; TW, T'Way Air; OZ, Asiana Airlines; 7C, Jeju Air; BX, Air Busan • ETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. *(The Saipan Tribune is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)*

STAR MARIANAS AIR, INC.

FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF MAY 18, 2021

SAIPAN TO ROTA

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
1301	8:30AM	9:00AM	Daily
1302	11:00AM	11:30AM	Daily
1303	1:30PM	2:00PM	Tues/Wed/ Thurs/Fri
1304	3:30PM	4:00PM	Daily

ROTA TO SAIPAN

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
3101	9:30AM	10:00AM	Daily
3102	12:00AM	12:30AM	Daily
3103	1:30PM	3:00PM	Tues/Wed/ Thurs/Fri
3104	4:30PM	5:00PM	Daily

ROTA TO GUAM

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
3401	12:15	12:45	Temporarily Unavailable

GUAM TO ROTA

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
4301	13:00	13:30	Temporarily Unavailable

SAIPAN TO TINIAN

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
1201	7:00	7:15	Temporarily Unavailable
1202	8:00	8:15	Daily
1203	9:00	9:15	Daily
1204	10:00	10:15	Daily
1205	11:00	11:15	Daily
1206	12:00	12:15	Temporarily Unavailable
1207	13:00	13:15	Temporarily Unavailable
1208	14:00	14:15	Daily
1209	15:00	15:15	Daily
1210	16:00	16:15	Daily
1211	17:00	17:15	Daily
1212	17:00	17:15	Temporarily Unavailable

TINIAN TO SAIPAN

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
2101	7:30	7:45	Temporarily Unavailable
2102	8:30	8:45	Daily
2103	9:30	9:45	Daily
2104	10:30	10:45	Daily
2105	11:30	11:45	Daily
2106	12:30	12:45	Temporarily Unavailable
2107	13:30	13:45	Temporarily Unavailable
2108	14:30	14:45	Daily
2109	15:30	15:45	Daily
2110	16:30	16:45	Daily
2111	17:30	17:45	Daily
2112	18:30	18:45	Temporarily Unavailable

PROTECTING HOME

Guam native returns during Exercise Cope North 2022

By AUBREE OWENS
36TH WING PUBLIC AFFAIRS

"I remember when I was about 6 years old and my family and I were driving along the main road on Andersen Air Force Base, passing by the airfield," he said. "Looking back, I realize the aircraft I saw was most likely an F-15C under one of the sun shades, and I remember thinking how cool it would be to fly it one day."

U.S. Air Force Capt. Celestino Aguon, also known as "Torch," an F-15C Eagle pilot with the 67th Fighter Squadron assigned to Kadena Air Base, Japan, is a Guam native and was the first member of his family to join the Air Force. Although he didn't have a plan to join the military as a young boy, he always had a love for aviation which has led him to where he is today.

Aguon was born and raised in Mangilao, Guam. He attended elementary, middle and high school all on the island and then went on and attended the University of Guam to study mathematics. Throughout his time in school, Aguon's love for aviation grew and he began learning how to fly aircraft right out of Antonio B. Won Pat International Airport, Guam. "I got my private pilot's license and my commercial license here after college and then received additional training out in the states," said Aguon.

U.S. AIR FORCE/STAFF SGT. AUBREE OWENS

U.S. Air Force Capt. Celestino Aguon, also known as "Torch," an F-15C Eagle pilot with the 67th Fighter Squadron assigned to Kadena Air Base, Japan, takes a photo next to the first aircraft he flew prior to joining the military at Antonio B. Won Pat International Airport, Guam, Feb. 23, 2022.

After he received his private pilot's license, Aguon looked back on the day when he was 6 years old and dreamed of flying a fighter jet and he commissioned in the U.S. Air Force. Due to his ambition and success during training, he was awarded his very first choice of job as an F-15 pilot in 2014.

Fast forward eight years, Aguon is currently stationed at Kadena AB, and he was selected as part of the team to participate in Exercise Cope North 2022. The exercise is a multilateral U.S. Pacific Air Forces-sponsored field training exercise that is conducted annually at Andersen Air Force Base, Guam that occurred from Feb. 2-18, 2022.

During the exercise, fighter aircrafts from the U.S. Air Force, Japan Air Self-Defense Force and Royal Australian Air Force conducted aerial refueling, close air support, and counter-air missions.

"I got to take gas from my cousin, U.S. Air Force Capt. Dustin Alger, who is also stationed at Kadena AB with me, as he was flying his aircraft and I was flying mine—and to do it in our hometown was surreal," Aguon said.

Aguon stated that he feels fortunate to return to Guam for a training such as Cope North since it promotes safety for areas in the Pacific.

COURTESY PHOTO

U.S. Air Force Capt. Celestino Aguon stands next to his instructor before taking his first flight prior to joining the military at Antonio B. Won Pat International Airport, Guam in 2013. Aguon commissioned in the U.S. Air Force in 2014 and was awarded his very first choice of job as an F-15 pilot.

"Being here for Cope North 2022, I think of how we are promoting a free and open Indo-Pacific and it resonates for me since that is where my home is, and it's such a huge honor being part of the team that enables that," he said. Over the past three years, Aguon has returned to Guam a total of five times for a variety of exercises and training to include: Cope North three times, Valiant Shield, and a Resilient Typhoon exercise.

"It's been amazing being able to come back and participate in Cope North this year, since Guam is where it all started and it has always been special to me aviation wise," he said. Aguon has served the military for a total of eight years thus far, and plans to continue his career as a fighter pilot in the U.S. Air Force.

"It feels so surreal that 26 years later, here I am flying the jet I saw when I first dreamed of being a pilot," he said.

FBI warns of the impersonation of law enforcement and government officials

The Federal Bureau of Investigation is warning the public of ongoing widespread fraud schemes in which scammers impersonate law enforcement or government officials in attempts to extort money or steal personally identifiable information.

How it works

Scammers will often spoof authentic phone numbers and names and use fake credentials of well-known government and law enforcement agencies. Scammers will use an urgent and aggressive tone, refusing to speak to or leave a message with anyone other than their targeted victim; and will urge victims not to tell anyone else, including family, friends, or financial institutions, about what is occurring.

Payment is demanded in various forms, with the most prevalent being prepaid cards, wire transfers, and cash, sent by mail or inserted into cryptocurrency ATMs. Victims are asked to read prepaid card numbers over the phone or text a picture of the card. Mailed cash will be hidden or packaged to avoid detection by normal mail scanning devices. Wire transfers are often sent overseas so funds almost immediately vanish.

Scam tactics continually change, but often share many of the same characteristics. Examples of these tactics can include:

■ The victim's identity was allegedly used in a crime, such as a drug deal or money laundering. The victim is asked to verify their identity, including social security number and date of birth. The victim is threatened with arrest, prosecution, or imprisonment if they do not pay to remove charges or assist in the investigation against the "real" criminals.

■ The victim is accused of not reporting for jury duty and is being fined, or the victim missed a court date and there is a warrant for their arrest unless a payment is made.

■ Text messages from spoofed government agencies requesting information regarding passport or driver's license renewals.

■ A notification that your personal information has been compromised and to contact the agency immediately.

■ Medical practitioners are contacted to warn of the expiration of their medical licensing, or their license was utilized to conduct a crime. The scammers will threaten revocation of their license or registration, and the medical professional is compelled to renew their license to protect their professional reputation.

Many victims report extortion by law enforcement and government impersonators in connection with other types of fraud.

■ A romance scam victim begins to realize they are being defrauded and stops communicating with the scammer. Often, the victim is contacted by a law enforcement impersonator attempting to extort the victim to clear their name for participating in a crime or to aid in the capture of the romance scammer.

■ A lottery scam victim is contacted by law enforcement to collect taxes and fees. Sometimes the impersonator will state the victim is caught in a scam, and the victim needs to pay to get their money back.

■ A victim is contacted regarding a government grant, but must pay taxes and fees to claim their funds.

Protect yourself

Law enforcement authorities or government officials will never contact members of the public or medical practitioners by telephone to demand any form of payment, or to request personal or sensitive information. Any legitimate investigation or legal action will be done in person or by official letter. Always ask for credentials to validate identity.

■ No legitimate law enforcement or government official will request payment via prepaid cards or cryptocurrency ATM.

■ Never give personally identifying information to anyone without verifying the person is who they say they are.

If you are a victim

Cease all contact with the scammers immediately.

Notify your financial institutions and safeguard any financial accounts.

Contact your local law enforcement and file a police report.

File a complaint with the FBI IC3 at www.ic3.gov.

Be sure to keep any financial transaction information, including prepaid cards and banking records and all telephone, text, or email communications. ***(PR)***

USCIS sets policies to better protect abused, neglected, abandoned immigrant children

WASHINGTON, D.C.— U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services announced yesterday new policies that will provide better protection to immigrant children who are victims of abuse, neglect, abandonment, or similar parental maltreatment.

"Today, we are taking action to help immigrant children in the U.S. who have been abused, neglected, or abandoned and offer them protection to help rebuild their lives," said USCIS director Ur Jaddou. "These policies will provide humanitarian protection to vulnerable young people for whom a juvenile court has determined that it is in their best interest to remain in the United States."

The new policies include updating regulations to clarify Special Immigrant Juvenile, or SIJ, eligibility criteria such as updating an age-out provision to protect petitioners who turn 21 while their petition is pending. Additionally, USCIS is updating regulations for evidentiary requirements to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the program and ensure that eligible victims of parental abuse, neglect, or abandonment receive SIJ classification and a pathway to apply for lawful permanent residence status.

USCIS may consent to a grant of SIJ classification when the petitioner has provided evidence of court-ordered relief from parental abuse, neglect, abandonment, or a similar basis under state law, as well as evidence of the factual basis for a juvenile court's determinations. The regulations also make clear that petitioners cannot be required to contact their alleged abuser while USCIS makes a decision in their SIJ case. An SIJ petitioner may have an attorney, accredited representative, and/or trusted adult present, if an interview is scheduled, but only attorneys and accredited representatives are entitled to make a statement during such interviews.

In addition to issuing the updated regulations, USCIS is updating the USCIS Policy Manual to consider deferred action and related employment authorization for noncitizens classified as SIJs who are ineligible to apply for adjustment of status to LPR status solely because a visa is not immediately available. Deferred action and employment authorization will provide invaluable assistance to these vulnerable noncitizens who have limited financial and other support systems in the United States while they await an available visa number.

This Policy Manual update is effective May 6, 2022, and applies to eligible noncitizens classified as SIJs before, on, or after that date, based on an approved Form I-360, Petition for Ameriasian, Widow(er), or Special Immigrant. ***(USCIS)***

Business

United starts Ukraine aid to fly in workers, supplies

» People can donate miles and funds to Airlink, Americares, American Red Cross and World Central Kitchen

» Airline to match first five million miles and $100,000 donated and will award up to 1,000 bonus miles for cash donations

CHICAGO, Illinois—United announced Tuesday a fundraising effort that has the potential to play a critical role in the mission to fly aid workers and supplies to the areas of Ukraine that are most in need.

Starting Tuesday, United's MileagePlus members can donate cash or miles to the airline's signature relief partners—Airlink, Americares, American Red Cross and World Central Kitchen—by visiting united.com/Ukraine-Support. United will match the first five million donated miles—the equivalent of hundreds of connecting flights to places like Poland, Hungary and Romania—and $100,000 as well as award bonus miles to anyone who gives $50 or more.

"The human tragedy we are witnessing in Ukraine is horrifying and has shocked us all so we're doing our part to quickly help get aid to the people who desperately need relief," said United president Brett Hart. "Our partners have been on the ground for more than a week and it's clear they need more resources to fulfill their mission of flying workers and supplies to and from the frontlines of this crisis. We're proud to do our part and will continue to look for ways to lend support where it's needed."

United's relief partners are already on the ground in the countries supporting Ukraine and are assisting in a number of different ways including:

■ Airlink: Using the power of aviation to deliver critical aid—medical, WASH, shelter, and emergency response and medical teams for 20-plus humanitarian organizations to help refugees.

■ Americares: Mobilizing large-scale shipments of medicine and relief supplies and prepared to deploy an emergency medical team to provide essential health services for refugees fleeing Ukraine.

■ World Central Kitchen: Working with local restaurants, caterers, and food trucks in the region to provide hot, nourishing meals at border crossings, shelters, and other refugee communities across Ukraine, Poland, Hungary, Moldova, Romania and Slovakia.

■ American Red Cross: Supporting the global Red Cross network providing humanitarian relief to those affected by the Ukraine crisis.

In addition to fundraising efforts, United has paused Russian airspace transit, suspended interline agreements with Russian carriers and until further notice, credit card payments from Russia will no longer be accepted on the United app or united.com.

For more information on United's humanitarian campaign or to donate, visit united.com/UkraineSupport. ***(PR)***

BUSINESS BRIEFS

McDonald's, Starbucks, Coke, Pepsi join exodus out of Russia

DETROIT (AP)—McDonald's, Starbucks, Coca-Cola, PepsiCo and General Electric—ubiquitous global brands and symbols of U.S. corporate might—all announced Tuesday they were temporarily suspending their business in Russia in response to the country's invasion of Ukraine. "Our values mean we cannot ignore the needless human suffering unfolding in Ukraine," McDonald's President and CEO Chris Kempczinski said in an open letter to employees. The Chicago-based burger giant said it will temporarily close 850 stores but continue paying its 62,000 employees in Russia "who have poured their heart and soul into our McDonald's brand." Kempczinski said it's impossible to know when the company will be able to reopen its stores.

Shell says it will stop buying Russian oil, natural gas

LONDON (AP)—Shell said Tuesday that it will stop buying Russian oil after Ukrainian officials criticized the energy giant for buying a shipment of crude from Moscow and demanded that all multinational companies sever ties with Russia over the war. The move came hours before the U.S. and British governments banned Russian oil imports. The European Union has held back because of heavy reliance on Russian oil and natural gas and concerns about the impact on global energy supplies. The turmoil has rattled global markets, sending oil prices surging to a 14-year high of $139 a barrel overnight. London-based Shell said it would immediately stop buying Russian oil on the spot market, which is used for one-time deals involving rapid deliveries, and it would not renew longer-term contracts. The company intends to totally withdraw from the Russian market for oil, oil products, natural gas and liquefied natural gas in a "phased manner."

At least 6 US state governments hacked by China

WASHINGTON (AP)—Hackers working on behalf of the Chinese government broke into the computer networks of at least six state governments in the United States in the last year, according to a report released Tuesday by a private cybersecurity firm. The report from Mandiant does not identify the compromised states or offer a motive for the intrusions, which began last May. But the Chinese group believed responsible for the breaches, APT41, is known to launch hacking operations both for old-fashioned espionage purposes and for financial gain. "While the ongoing crisis in Ukraine has rightfully captured the world's attention and the potential for Russian cyber threats are real, we must remember that other major threat actors around the world are continuing their operations as-usual," said Geoff Ackerman, a principal threat analyst at Reston, Virginia-based Mandiant Inc. He added in his statement: "We cannot allow other cyber activity to fall to the wayside, especially given our observations that this campaign from APT41, one of the most prolific threat actors around, continues to this day."

Nation

1st trial in Capitol riot ends in a conviction on all counts

WASHINGTON (AP)—A Texas man was convicted on Tuesday of storming the U.S. Capitol with a holstered handgun, a milestone victory for federal prosecutors in the first trial among hundreds of cases arising from last year's riot.

A jury also convicted Guy Wesley Reffitt of obstructing Congress' joint session to certify the Electoral College vote on Jan. 6, 2021, of interfering with police officers who were guarding the Capitol and of threatening his two teenage children if they reported him to law enforcement after the attack. Jurors deliberated about three hours and convicted him on all counts.

The verdict could be a bellwether for many other Capitol riot cases. It could give Justice Department prosecutors more leverage in plea negotiations and discourage other defendants from gambling on trials of their own.

Gregg Sofer, a former federal prosecutor who served as U.S. attorney for the Western District of Texas from October 2020 to February 2021, said before Reffitt's trial started that it would be "the canary in the coal mine."

"If you're a defendant awaiting trial at this point, the canary just died," said Sofer, now a partner at the law firm Husch Blackwell. "I do think it is likely to affect people's perceptions about the likelihood of their success."

Reffitt, 49, of Wylie, Texas, didn't testify at his trial, which started last Wednesday. He showed little visible reaction to the verdict, but his face was covered by a mask.

Outside court, his wife Nicole said the verdict was "against all American people. If you're going to be convicted on your First Amendment rights, all Americans should be wary. This fight has just begun."

She said her husband was being used as an example by the government. "You are all in danger," she said.

In a statement after the verdict, U.S. Attorney Matthew Graves in Washington thanked the jury "for upholding the rule of law and for its diligent service in this case."

During the trial's closing arguments on Monday, Assistant U.S. Attorney Risa Berkower told jurors that Reffitt drove to Washington, D.C., intending to stop Congress from certifying President Joe Biden's electoral victory. Reffitt proudly "lit the fire" that allowed others in a mob to overwhelm Capitol police officers near the Senate doors, the prosecutor said.

Biden promises improved care for veterans

AP

President Joe Biden speaks with Joshua Geering, lead therapist with the Spinal Cord Injury/Disabilities Center, as he demonstrates a motorized wheelchair at the Fort Worth VA Clinic in Fort Worth, Texas, Tuesday, March 8, 2022.

FORT WORTH, Texas (AP)—President Joe Biden on Tuesday said U.S. veterans were the "backbone, the spine, the sinew" of the nation, as he pushed for better help for members of the military who face health problems, including after exposure to burn pits.

"You're the best of us," Biden said.

For the president, the issue is very personal. In last week's State of the Union address, Biden raised the prospect of whether being near the chemicals from pits where military waste was incinerated in Iraq led to the death of his son Beau.

"We don't know for sure if a burn pit was the cause of his brain cancer, or the diseases of so many of our troops," Biden said in the speech. "But I'm committed to finding out everything we can."

Biden traveled with Veterans Affairs Secretary Denis McDonough to Texas, where they visited a VA clinic in Fort Worth. There, he met with veterans, including one who was stationed near a pit and later had six weeks of treatment and chemotherapy. Biden greeted a veteran named John, who was seated in a wheelchair, asking him, "How are you?"

"Good to see you man, let me say hi to you," Biden said, walking over to shake his hand.

At the Tarrant County Resource Connection, the president was joined by about 150 people, including local elected officials and community leaders, Republican Rep. Jake Ellzey and Democratic Rep. Colin Allred.

"There is a price to be paid for every conflict we're in," said Ellzey, adding that the country had an obligation to care for veterans and the families any killed in action leave behind.

Biden begged veterans to ask for help when they need it, noting that 17 veterans die by suicide every day, more than in combat.

Asia

Satellite images show activity at North Korean nuclear site

SEOUL, South Korea (AP)—Commercial satellite images suggest a resumption of construction activity at North Korea's nuclear testing ground nearly four years after leader Kim Jong Un declared the site's closure and invited foreign journalists to observe the destruction of tunnels ahead of his first summit with then-U.S. President Donald Trump.

Analysts say it's unclear how long it would take North Korea to restore the site for nuclear detonations if it intends to do so. The site in Punggye-ri in the country's northeast was used for its sixth and last nuclear test in 2017.

The sighting of construction activity at the site comes amid a deepening diplomatic freeze since the collapse of the second Kim-Trump meeting in February 2019, when the Americans rejected North Korean demands for major sanctions relief in exchange for a partial surrender of its nuclear capabilities.

North Korea has used the pause in talks to further expand its military capabilities, including nine rounds of missile launches in 2022 alone. The unusually fast pace indicates an intent to pressure the Biden administration, which has offered open-ended talks but shown no willingness to concede on sanctions.

Kim presided over a ruling Workers' Party meeting in January where Politburo members denounced what they described as U.S. hostility and issued a veiled threat to resume tests of nuclear explosives and long-range missiles that Kim unilaterally suspended in 2018 to create diplomatic space with Trump.

Some experts say Kim is reviving an old playbook of brinkmanship to extract concessions from Washington and his neighbors as he grapples with a decaying economy crippled by the pandemic, mismanagement and persisting U.S.-led sanctions.

The new construction at Punggye-ri was first reported in an analysis of satellite images from Maxar Technologies by Jeffrey Lewis and Dave Schmerler at the James Martin Center for Nonproliferation Studies at the Middlebury Institute of International Studies.

Satellite photos from Planet Labs PBC analyzed Tuesday by The Associated Press showed two new structures appeared to have been built to the site's south between February and early March. Those images were taken on March 6, two days after the Maxar images used by Lewis and Schmerler.

South Koreans vote for president

SEOUL, South Korea (AP)—South Koreans were voting for a new president Wednesday, with an outspoken liberal ruling party candidate and a conservative former prosecutor considered the favorites in a tight race that has aggravated domestic divisions.

Pre-election surveys showed liberal Lee Jae-myung, a former governor of South Korea's most populous Gyeonggi province, and his main conservative challenger, ex-prosecutor general Yoon Suk Yeol, with neck-and-neck support, way ahead of 10 other contenders. The winner will take office in May and serve a single five-year term as leader of the world's 10th-largest economy.

Lee and Yoon conducted one of the most bitter political campaigns in recent memory. Both recently agreed that if they won they would not conduct politically motivated investigations against the other, but many believe the losing candidate could still face criminal probes over some of the scandals they're been implicated in.

Critics say neither candidate has presented a clear strategy on how they would ease the threat from North Korea and its nuclear weapons. They also say voters are skeptical about how both would handle international relations amid the U.S.-China rivalry and how they would address widening economic inequality and runaway housing prices.

"Despite the significance of this year's election, the race has centered too much on negative campaigning," said Jang Seung-Jin, a professor at Seoul's Kookmin University, adding that neither leading candidate laid out a convincing blueprint on how they would lead South Korea.

The election comes as South Korea has been grappling with an omicron-driven COVID-19 surge. On Wednesday, South Korea's health authorities reported 342,446 new virus cases, another record high.

After the voting began at 6 a.m., masks-wearing voters waited in long lines at some polling stations before putting on vinyl gloves or using hand sanitizers to cast ballots. People infected with the coronavirus were to vote after regular voting ends Wednesday evening.

ASIAN BRIEFS

Philippine authorities seize largest drug haul this year

MANILA, Philippines (AP)—Philippine authorities seized suspected methamphetamine estimated to be worth more than 1 billion pesos ($19.6 million) at a home in the capital region Tuesday and arrested a Chinese suspect, as the president's crackdown on illegal drugs pressed on in his final months in power. Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency chief Wilkins Villanueva said about 160 kilograms (352 pounds) of the suspected stimulant, locally called shabu, was discovered in the house in Valenzuela city in metropolitan Manila after the arrest of the Chinese suspect and his Filipina companion by law enforcers who pretended to be drug buyers. If the seized substance, some packed in tea bags, turns out to be methamphetamine, it would be the largest illegal drug haul so far this year. Tuesday's raid was the latest in a series of antidrug operations across the country this month that have led to the arrest of 11 suspects and the confiscation of a large amount of methamphetamine, Villanueva said.

Malaysia to reopen borders April 1 after two years

KUALA LUMPUR, Malaysia (AP)—Malaysia will reopen its borders on April 1 after two years and lift remaining coronavirus restrictions on businesses as it moves to restore normal life, Prime Minister Ismail Sabri Yaakob announced Tuesday. Ismail said the decision was a result of the country's high vaccination rate, low hospital bed usage by COVID-19 patients and small percentage of serious cases. The move "allows us all to return back to an almost normal life after almost two years at war with COVID-19," he said in a national broadcast. "Most importantly, Malaysia is now an open destination." Malaysia shut its borders in March 2020.

World

Suffering goes on in encircled Mariupol as evacuation fails

AP

A man lights a fire under the kettle in a yard of an apartment building hit by shelling in Mariupol, Ukraine, Monday, March 7, 2022.

MARIUPOL, Ukraine (AP)—Corpses lie in the streets of Mariupol. Hungry people break into stores in search of food and melt snow for water. Thousands huddle in basements, trembling at the sound of Russian shells pounding this strategic port city.

"Why shouldn't I cry?" Goma Janna demanded as she wept by the light of an oil lamp below ground, surrounded by women and children. "I want my home, I want my job. I'm so sad about people and about the city, the children."

A humanitarian crisis is unfolding in this encircled city of 430,000, and Tuesday brought no relief: An attempt to evacuate civilians and deliver badly needed food, water and medicine through a designated safe corridor failed, with Ukrainian officials saying Russian forces had fired on the convoy before it reached the city.

Nearly two weeks into the invasion, the Russians have advanced deep along Ukraine's coastline in what could establish a land bridge to Crimea, which Moscow seized from Ukraine in 2014. Mariupol, which sits on the Azov Sea, has been surrounded by Russian soldiers for days.

Mariupol, said Ukrainian Deputy Prime Minister Iryna Vereshchuk, is in a "catastrophic situation."

In other developments in the Russian invasion:

■ Poland offered to give all of its MiG-29 fighter jets to the U.S., apparently agreeing to an arrangement that would allow them to be used by Ukraine's military. But Pentagon press secretary John Kirby later said the plan is not "tenable" and raises serious concerns for the NATO alliance. He said the U.S. would discuss it further with Poland.

■ U.N. officials said that 2 million people have now fled Ukraine.

■ Russia's economic isolation deepened as U.S. President Joe Biden announced a ban on Russian oil imports and Shell said it will no longer buy oil and natural gas from the country. Also, Adidas and McDonald's said they are suspending their operations in Russia.

For days, as Moscow's forces have laid siege to Ukrainian cities, attempts to create corridors to safely evacuate civilians have stumbled amid continuing fighting and objections to the proposed routes. Ukraine has rejected Moscow's offers of corridors that lead civilians to Russia or its ally Belarus.

'Russia underestimated Ukraine's resistance'

WASHINGTON (AP)—The United States believes Russia underestimated the strength of Ukraine's resistance before launching an invasion that has likely caused thousands of Russian casualties, the Biden administration's top intelligence official told lawmakers Tuesday.

The testimony, in a hearing before the House Intelligence Committee, amounted to the first public assessment of the 2-week-old war by the nation's senior intelligence officials, who offered their insights into the thinking and motives of Russian President Vladimir Putin as his forces continue their march through Ukraine.

The officials made clear that Russia's assault has been slowed by unexpected resistance by Ukrainian defenders and that it was now uncertain if Putin would proceed with a "maximalist" strategy to try to capture all of Ukraine or would settle for something short of that. Either way, they said they believed he was determined to press his invasion forward despite mounting casualties, global sanctions and efforts by Western nations to isolate the Kremlin, including a U.S. ban on Russian oil imports.

"We assess Putin feels aggrieved the West does not give him proper deference and perceives this as a war he cannot afford to lose," Director of National Intelligence Avril Haines said. "But what he might be willing to accept as a victory may change over time given the significant costs he is incurring."

The U.S. officials who testified Tuesday noted that the invasion has played out largely as they had forecast, in contrast to Putin's own overly rosy assessments of the speed with which he could take the country. U.S. officials, for instance, assess that Putin had banked on being able to seize the Ukrainian capital, Kyiv, within the first two days of the campaign but he has yet to be able to fully encircle the city, CIA Director William Burns said.

Environment

Youth Affairs Office beautifies parks and beaches

By IVA MAURIN
CORRESPONDENT

Since December, the CNMI Youth Affairs Office has been spending their Tuesdays and Thursdays of every week to make sure that beaches and parks are clean and safe for all, especially the youth.

Over 20 of their staff have collectively cleaned up some 20 beaches on Saipan, including Wing Beach and Tanapag Beach in the North; Micro Beach, 13 Fisherman, and along Beach Road in Central Saipan; and Coral Ocean Point, Pakpak Beach, Ladder Beach, and Obyan Beach in the south.

Youth Affairs Office special assistant Ali Ogo told Saipan Tribune that the beautification project was requested and established by Gov. Ralph DLG Torres, in partnership with Public Works Secretary James Ada, to target beaches and playgrounds to ensure that children and their families have a safe and clean environment to enjoy.

"It's something that we want to prioritize. It's a special request coming from the governor; his primary focus is the youth in general," Ogo said.

Under the Office of the Governor, the Youth Affairs Office's mission is to cater to the youth and community in general, focusing on establishing developmental programs and activities for both the children in the community and their families.

The project is called "Para I lina'la' I famagu'on-ta yan I komunidat-ta projectPara I lina'la' I famagu'on-ta yan I komunidat-ta project," which in English translates to "life of the children and the youth, and for our community," according to Youth Affairs representative Randall Pangelinan.

"It's really to give the sense to the children that they are very important to us, and we must try to always keep our environment clean for them. The beach is somewhere for them to go to on the weekends, and [we need to] make sure that it's clean," Pangelinan said.

Most of the trash the Youth Affairs Office staff pick up are cans, marine debris, and even tin roofs blown by typhoons. They also have encountered people who litter at the beach. Ogo is encouraging the community to work together—to get rid of worries about "dangerous stuff" found in beaches and parks.

"We're trying to help, do our part, and I want to encourage the community to do their part as well," Ogo said.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Every Tuesday and Thursday of the week, staff of the CNMI Youth Affairs Office clean up parks and beaches, as part of the "Para I lina'la' I famagu'on-ta yan I komunidat-ta" project. So far, the group has cleaned up about 20 beaches and parks on island, this one in particular, held in Tanapag Beach, done in partnership with the Department of Land and Natural Resources Division of Parks and Recreations.

The CNMI Office of Youth Affairs cleaned up Wing Beach in January, as part of the "Para I lina'la' I famagu'on-ta yan I komunidat-ta" project which aims to beautify beaches and parks on island, for the benefit of the youth and the community. CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

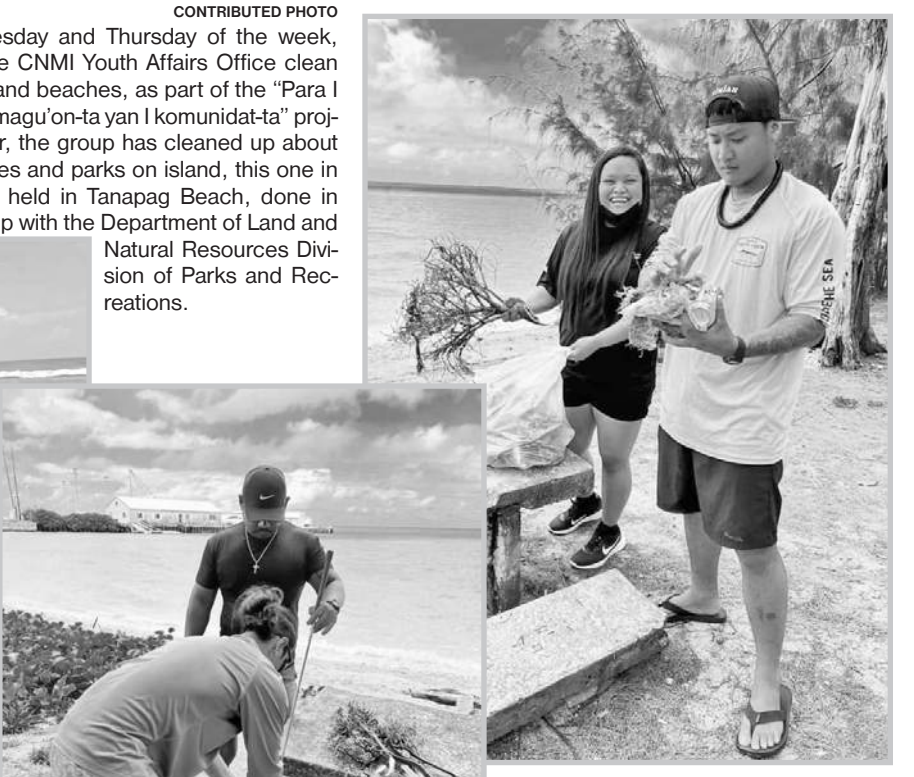
"When I say dangerous stuff, a lot of people have children and the last thing they want to worry about is getting stabbed by something or, eating something they are not supposed to. …We just want to keep [beaches and playgrounds] clean because we understand that throughout each and every day of the week, children are persistently moving there. We don't want anybody [get on] anything sharp, we want to keep it safe."

The Youth Affairs Office is planning to conduct other environmental projects and has been partnering with other agencies to facilitate different programs beyond beach and park beautification. They currently are focused on athletics programs—basketball trainings and activities that help keep the youth active and improve their immune system, especially with the pandemic.

The youth centers and its programs are not as active due to the pandemic, but the Youth Affairs Office staff are still busy preparing for after-school and developmental programs for the youth. Currently, in partnership with the Office of the Governor, the Department of Corrections, and the 22nd House minority bloc, the Gualo Rai Youth Center is also getting its much-needed repair and makeover.

"We are working hard to ensure a safe and healthy future," Ogo said. "We are working hard to provide a smooth road for the future, for proper growth…a beneficial future in general."

To learn more about the CNMI Youth Affairs Office's beautification program, as well as their programs for the youth, contact (670) 235-1299, cnmiyouthaffairs@gmail.com, or visit their Facebook account: https://www.facebook.com/cnmiyouthaffairs.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

CNMI Youth Affairs Office staff pick up cans and other trash along the beach. According to Youth Affairs special assistant Ali Ogo, most of the trash they pick up, aside from cans, are marine debris and tin roofs. Ogo also appealed to everyone in the community to help keep the beaches and parks clean and safe for the youth of the CNMI.

Life & Style

Former Miss Ukraine describes escape from Kyiv, asks for aid

LOS ANGELES (AP)—A former Miss Ukraine winner on Tuesday described her journey with her young son to escape Kyiv and her homeland as Russian troops invaded the country last month, and called on countries to do more to arm her countrymen and women.

Veronika Didusenko, who was crowned Miss Ukraine in 2018, said she and her 7-year-old son were awoken on the first day of the invasion to the sounds of air raid sirens and explosions, and they joined thousands of others on the road to evacuate.

AP

Veronika Didusenko, Miss Ukraine 2018, sits beside women's rights attorney Gloria Allred during a news conference at Allred's office in Los Angeles on Tuesday, March 8, 2022.

"On my ... journey to the border of Ukraine, there was no place where sirens would not sound, where rockets and bombs would not explode," she said.

Didusenko told her story at a news conference in the Los Angeles office of women's rights attorney Gloria Allred, who said she became friends with the former beauty queen several months ago.

Didusenko and her son eventually made it to Moldova and traveled through other European countries before reaching Geneva, Switzerland. Didusenko said she made the "heartbreaking" decision to leave her son there to travel to the United States to hold the press conference with Allred.

Didusenko, dressed in the blue and yellow colors of the Ukrainian flag, said she and Allred decided the situation on the ground in parts of her homeland was an important story to highlight on International Women's Day.

"Right now, millions of Ukrainian children and their mothers are trembling at every sound in the subway stations and bomb shelters. Even more heartbreaking that women are giving birth in such conditions in these shelters," Didusenko said.

She said her request to get a visa for her son to travel to the U.S. has been rejected. She plans to return to Geneva this weekend to reunite with him. Allred said she was hoping U.S. officials would relax visa policies to allow more Ukrainians to travel here.

Didusenko said Ukrainians are committed to defending their country, but need more help from other nations.

"Ukrainians absolutely have the courage to defend their land and homes, but in order to stop the endless attack from the east and north, they are in desperate need of weapons and ammunition. We will fight for our freedom and yours."

Sex abuse lawsuit against Prince Andrew formally dismissed

NEW YORK (AP)—A U.S. judge dismissed the sex abuse lawsuit against Britain's Prince Andrew on Tuesday, three weeks after lawyers for the American woman who filed it reached a deal calling for the prince to make a substantial donation to his accuser's charity and declare he never meant to malign her character.

U.S. District Judge Lewis A. Kaplan signed court papers dismissing the August lawsuit after lawyers on both sides asked him to do so earlier in the day. The judge had given them until March 17 to complete the deal or he would set a trial date. The lawsuit cannot be refiled.

Prince Andrew

The lawyers revealed three weeks ago that they had tentatively agreed to a settlement in which the prince would donate to Virginia Giuffre's charity and make the declaration about her character.

Andrew strenuously denied Giuffre's allegations after she sued him, accusing the British royal of sexually abusing her while she traveled with financier Jeffrey Epstein in 2001 when she was 17.

Giuffre, 38, reached the settlement with Andrew after the judge rejected the prince's bid to win early dismissal of the lawsuit earlier this year.

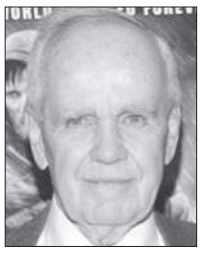
In a letter to the judge last month from Giuffre attorney David Boies, a statement was included that said, in part: "Prince Andrew intends to make a substantial donation to Ms. Giuffre's charity in support of victims' rights. Prince Andrew has never intended to malign Ms. Giuffre's character, and he accepts that she has suffered both as an established victim of abuse and as a result of unfair public attacks."

According to the statement, Prince Andrew acknowledged that Epstein trafficked "countless young girls" over many years and said the prince "regrets his association with Epstein, and commends the bravery of Ms. Giuffre and other survivors in standing up for themselves and others."

He also pledged to support the victims of sex trafficking as part of demonstrating his regret.

Cormac McCarthy has 2 novels coming out

NEW YORK (AP)—Cormac McCarthy has two novels coming out this fall, his first fiction releases since the Pulitzer Prize-winning "The Road" in 2006.


McCarthy

Publisher Alfred A. Knopf announced Tuesday that "The Passenger," a long-rumored novel about "morality and science" and "the legacy of sin" that McCarthy reportedly began decades ago, would come out Oct. 25. "Stella Maris," a prequel to "The Passenger" set eight years earlier, is scheduled for Nov. 22. The two works will be available as a box set on Dec. 6.

"We have a plane crash, a trove of gold coins buried deep underground and hidden in copper pipes, a rare Amati violin that vanishes, an abandoned oil rig in the middle of the ocean, and an Italian race car seized by the IRS—an utterly gripping tale," McCarthy's editor at Knopf, Jenny Jackson, said in a statement.

McCarthy, 88, is known for such Western and apocalyptic novels as "The Road," "Blood Meridian" and "No Country for Old Men," which was adapted by the Coen brothers into an Academy Award-winning movie of the same name. His other honors include a National Book Award and National Book Critics Circle Award for "All the Pretty Horses."

Bob Dylan book on 'Modern Song' to come out in November

NEW YORK (AP)—Bob Dylan has a new book coming out this fall, a collection of more than 60 essays about songs and songwriters he admires, from Stephen Foster to Elvis Costello.

The new book, "The Philosophy of Modern Song," is his first release of new material since the acclaimed memoir "Chronicles, Volume One" was published in 2004. "The Philosophy of Modern Song" is scheduled for Nov. 8.

"He analyzes what he calls the trap of easy rhymes, breaks down how the addition of a single syllable can diminish a song, and even explains how bluegrass relates to heavy metal," according to an announcement issued Tuesday by Simon & Schuster. "And while they (the essays) are ostensibly about music, they are really meditations and reflections on the human condition. Running throughout the book are nearly 150 carefully curated photos as well as a series of dream-like riffs that, taken together, resemble an epic poem."

The 80-year-old singer-songwriter won the Nobel Prize for literature in 2016 and has continued to tour and record, his most recent album, "Rough and Rowdy Ways," was released in 2020.

Marriage reeling after family's horrific loss

DEAR ABBY: Our house burned down a year ago, and we lost everything. My husband, "Jeff," tried desperately to get to our 2-year-old daughter, but she perished in the fire. I managed to get our 3-year-old son out while he was trying to save our daughter. Jeff ended up in a burn unit on a ventilator for nine days because he burned his lungs. When he was released from the hospital, things got worse.

We lived with my mom and stepdad for a bit until we found a place, but as soon as Jeff got home, he started hitting me and calling me a cheating slut. We have been together 20 years, and I have been faithful. If I go to the store or to run errands, he gets mad at me for being gone a little too long. If I try to explain what held me up, it's automatically because I'm cheating, but Jeff feels he can leave and be gone for hours, and it's OK for him.

I love him, but I can't take it anymore. When our son acts out and starts being mean to me, Jeff tells him to respect me, but I think to myself, "How can you tell him to respect me when you don't?" Abby, please help me.

SO LOST IN THE EAST

DEAR SO LOST: The fire and tragic death of your daughter has done more damage to your husband than sear his lungs. It has also taken an emotional toll. It is important that you no longer allow him to take out his anger and frustration with himself on you.

If you have any power at all in your relationship, insist he seek help from a licensed mental health professional. If he refuses, you cannot remain married to him because his physical and emotional abuse may continue to escalate, and seeing it will affect your son.

Have an escape plan in place before you confront him. A safe way to formulate one would be to contact the National Domestic Violence Hotline. The toll-free number is 800-799-7233 and the website is thehotline.org. Do it NOW.

■■■■

DEAR ABBY: My high school friend returns to our hometown once or twice a year. Her last several visits were exhausting. She talked about herself for hours without asking one question about my life. She objectifies men and calls people weak for expressing their emotions.

Our friendship has been a long one. I went to her wedding and did the flowers for her dad's funeral. But the more I understand myself, the more I see how toxic she is for me. I have reached the hard realization that I no longer want to be around her. I don't like who she is or how she makes me feel.

I would like us to simply drift apart, but she can be a bully. When I have tried to be unavailable, she has bullied me into seeing her anyway. My partner says I need to break up with her, but I don't want to hurt her or have a confrontation. How can I gracefully exit this relationship?

STRESSED IN THE WEST

DEAR STRESSED: There may not be a graceful way to exit from a relationship with a bully. Ask yourself which would be worse: telling her exactly what you have written to me, or allowing yourself to be steamrollered into another exhausting and frustrating encounter with her. Once you have the answer to that question, you will know exactly what to do, which may start with blocking her number.

DEAR ABBY

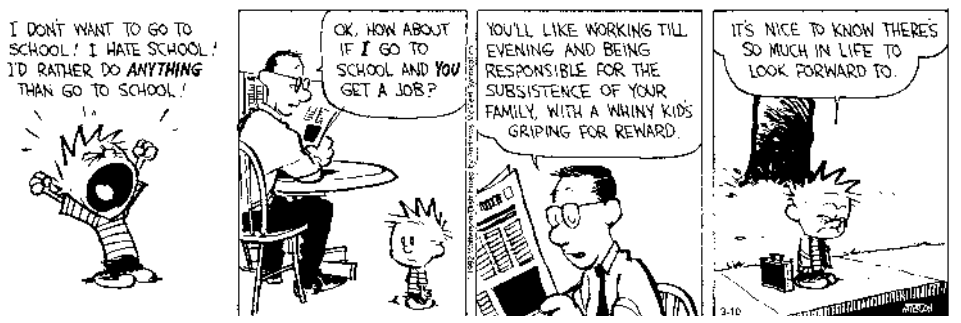
By Abigail Van Buren
UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Contact Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

Pastimes

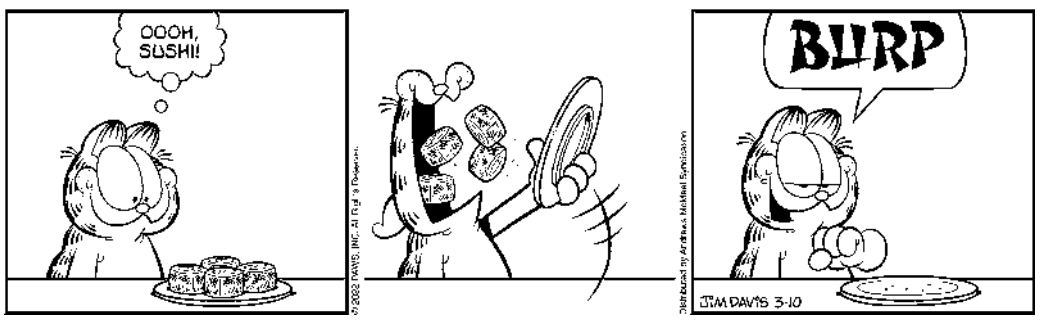
Calvin and Hobbes

By Bill Waterson


I DON'T WANT TO GO TO SCHOOL! I HATE SCHOOL! I'D RATHER DO ANYTHING THAN GO TO SCHOOL!
OK, HOW ABOUT IF I GO TO SCHOOL AND YOU GET A JOB?
YOU'LL LIKE WORKING TILL EVENING AND BEING RESPONSIBLE FOR THE SUBSISTENCE OF YOUR FAMILY, WITH A WHINY KID'S GRIPING FOR REWARD.
IT'S NICE TO KNOW THERE'S SO MUCH IN LIFE TO LOOK FORWARD TO.

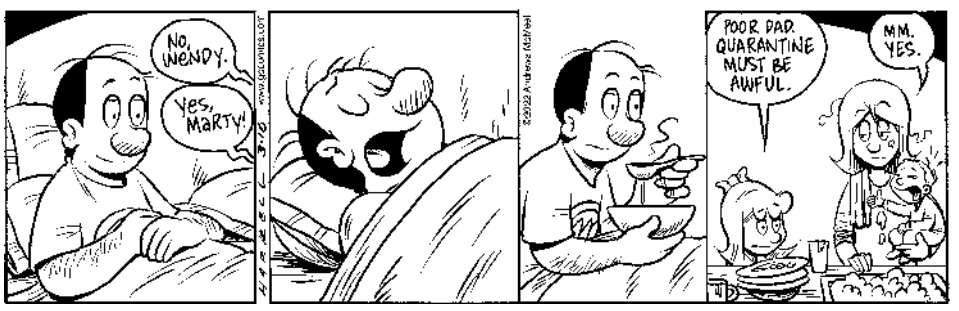
Garfield®

By Jim Davis



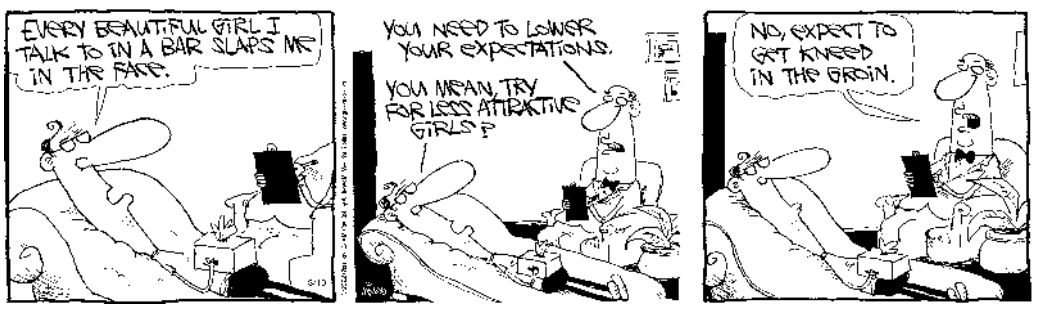
Adam@home

By Bryan Basset



The Duplex

By Glenn McCoy


EVERY BEAUTIFUL GIRL I TALK TO IN A BAR SLAPS ME IN THE FACE.
YOU NEED TO LOWER YOUR EXPECTATIONS.
YOU MEAN, TRY FOR LESS ATTRACTIVE GIRLS?
NO, EXPECT TO GET KNEED IN THE GROIN.

CROSSWORD

By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS
1 Twitches
5 Weir
8 Taxpayer IDs
12 Owl call
13 CBS logo
14 Frozen drink brand
15 Pitcher
16 MSNBC rival
17 Formerly, once
18 "— Bovary"
20 Walks with pride
22 '60s war zone
23 Wall St. whiz
24 Street
27 "Dark Shadows" vampire
32 Moreover
33 Squeeze (out)
34 Football's Manning
35 Laser-made picture
38 Snare
39 Rage
40 College URL ender
42 Like a duck's feet
45 Computer shortcuts
49 Both (Pref.)
50 Massage
52 Polynesian drink
53 Pair's air
54 Chemical suffix
55 Send forth
56 Former polit. divisions
57 Old space station
58 Go by subway

DOWN
1 Not us
2 Corn Belt state
3 Not single-sex
4 Maroon
5 Solstice month
6 Objectivist Rand
7 Clothing store section
8 Mountain chain
9 Cleaning brush
10 Tree home
11 Gels
19 Bell or Barker
21 Sandy color
24 Fan's shout
25 Sean — Lennon
26 Improviser
28 Rap sheet letters
29 Call to mind
30 Mode lead-in
31 Use a straw
36 Planetary paths
37 "Gosh!"
38 Country star Tanya
41 Opposite of nyet
42 Bankrolls
43 Flightless birds
44 Small amount
46 Actor Malek
47 "Amores" poet
48 Fill fully
51 Half of bi-

Solution time: 24 mins.

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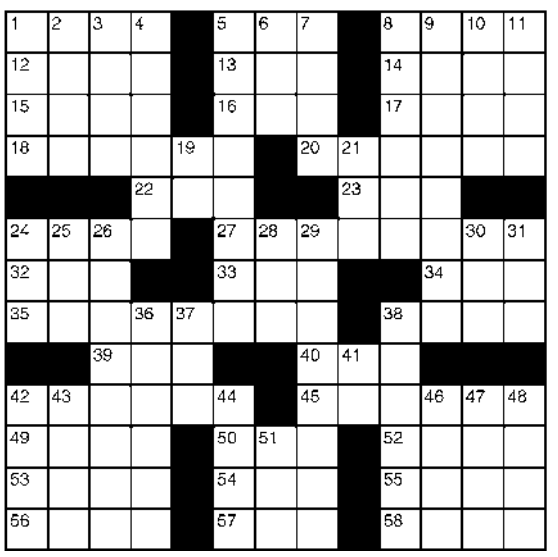
S	E	P	T	U	M	■	■	■	E	L	E	N	A
P	L	O	Y	■	L	E	G	A	L	P	A	D
U	L	E	E	■	V	E	E	■	E	I	N	E
D	E	M	S	■	I	L	L	■	R	C	A	S

Yesterday's answer 3-10



STUMPED? For answers to today's crossword, call **1-900-226-5955**! 99¢ per minute, touch-tone/rotary phones. (18+ only.) A King Features service, NYC.

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Olivia Wilde, 38; Carrie Underwood, 39; Jon Hamm, 51; Sharon Stone, 64.

Happy Birthday: Discipline is required if you plan to knock off your to-do list. Dedication, loyalty and responsibility for your accomplishments and happiness will ensure you reach your target. Embrace uncertainty as a chance to begin again or to replace what's no longer working for you with something new and exciting. Take ownership of your life and make things happen. Your numbers are 5, 12, 22, 28, 31, 39, 45.

ARIES *(March 21-April 19):* Find out all you can. Being well-informed will be the gateway to taking control of whatever situation you encounter. Don't let someone's uncertainty leave you in a quandary. Be decisive by following through with your well-thought-out plans. ✪✪✪✪

TAURUS *(April 20-May 20):* Set goals that help you avoid deviating from your plans. Take the high road, regardless of what others do. Change only what's necessary, and stick to a budget you can afford. Don't take a risk with your health or physical well-being. ✪✪✪

GEMINI *(May 21-June 20):* Keep your life simple and your plans and promises doable. Have a plan and budget in place, and be willing to do the work yourself. Walk away from temptation, ludicrous schemes and pushy people. Be good to yourself. ✪✪✪

CANCER *(June 21-July 22):* Know what you want before getting into a discussion with someone who doesn't share your opinion or wants to discourage you. Facts and truth are important, and doing what's right is what matters at the end of the day. Live and learn. ✪✪✪

LEO *(July 23-Aug. 22):* Emotional situations will surface when dealing with shared responsibilities or finances. Take the initiative to put a plan in place, and stick to an amount you are willing to spend. Personal improvements are in your best interest. Romance is favored. ✪✪✪✪

VIRGO *(Aug. 23-Sept. 22):* Share only what's necessary. If you give someone too much personal information, they will use it against you. Be a good listener, and deliver what you promise. Maintaining a good reputation will ward off rumors. Speak the truth and from the heart. ✪✪

LIBRA *(Sept. 23-Oct. 22):* Change your surroundings to accommodate what you want to pursue. Hard work will bring the rewards you desire. Don't slack off when it's time to give your all. Refuse to let emotional situations, temptation or indulgence take over. ✪✪✪✪✪

SCORPIO *(Oct. 23-Nov. 21):* Put your ideas to good use. Stop dreaming and start doing. A change will trigger insight into what you need to do to reach your goal. Take the initiative, and refuse to let anyone derail your plans. Broaden your horizons. ✪✪✪

SAGITTARIUS *(Nov. 22-Dec. 21):* You'll face an uphill battle if you let someone manipulate you emotionally. Concentrate on what makes sense and will bring you the highest returns. Your happiness depends on you, not what someone else wants. Protect your rights and pursue your goals. ✪✪✪

CAPRICORN *(Dec. 22-Jan. 19):* Rethink your strategy, revisit the past and use your experience to guide you in the right direction. Refuse to get caught up in a social frenzy that can cost financially or emotionally. Making a lifestyle adjustment offers peace of mind. ✪✪✪

AQUARIUS *(Jan. 20-Feb. 18):* You know what's best for you, so do what has to be done and don't look back. Put your heart and soul into your home and family, and build a life that brings you joy. Share something special with someone you love. ✪✪✪✪✪

PISCES *(Feb. 19-March 20):* Control your emotions to avoid a clash with a friend or relative. Be a good listener, and take responsibility for your actions and the promises you make. Minimize rather than expand, and set a budget that won't put you in debt. ✪✪

Birthday Baby: You are vigilant, curious and mindful. You are emotional and caring.

✪: Avoid conflicts; work behind the scenes. ✪✪: You can accomplish, but don't rely on others. ✪✪✪: Focus and you'll reach your goals. ✪✪✪✪: Aim high; start new projects. ✪✪✪✪✪: Nothing can stop you; go for gold.

EUGENIA LAST

THE LAST WORD IN ASTROLOGY

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SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku *By Dave Green*

9			2		1			3
			8		7			
		6				7		
2	8			9			5	4
3	9			8			7	1
		1				3		
			3		2			
5			6		9			2

Difficulty Level ★★★ 3/10

Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Saturday.

Yesterday's Answer

7	1	5	9	2	8	6	4	3
4	3	8	7	1	6	2	9	5
6	2	9	5	4	3	7	1	8
1	8	3	6	7	4	5	2	9
5	4	2	1	3	9	8	7	6
9	7	6	8	5	2	4	3	1
2	6	4	3	9	5	1	8	7
3	5	1	2	8	7	9	6	4
8	9	7	4	6	1	3	5	2

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WONDERWORD®

By DAVID OUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally and even backward. Find them, circle each letter of the word and strike it off the list. The leftover letters spell the WONDERWORD.

SECRET LOVE LETTERS Solution: 8 letters

N	C	P	M	A	T	S	S	D	R	O	W	I	S	H
O	O	R	E	P	A	P	T	E	T	I	P	I	N	K
I	U	I	U	L	I	A	M	O	H	E	B	R	P	O
N	R	E	T	S	O	Y	H	A	R	A	E	B	R	O
A	A	L	E	C	H	P	P	S	C	Y	R	M	O	B
P	G	I	M	R	E	P	O	K	D	N	I	K	P	N
M	E	M	O	R	Y	N	P	E	S	Y	M	B	O	L
O	Q	S	T	D	A	A	N	H	M	A	D	P	S	I
C	N	U	I	L	C	W	A	O	H	T	A	I	A	C
E	O	A	O	K	O	R	A	E	C	G	T	D	L	N
S	R	N	N	T	E	C	A	Y	E	T	E	R	D	E
Y	I	I	F	O	E	R	K	C	X	D	A	E	R	P
H	U	G	S	E	T	T	S	E	N	O	H	A	A	O
Y	R	T	N	E	S	E	T	I	R	W	C	M	C	H
R	E	N	N	I	D	S	U	O	M	Y	N	O	N	A

© 2022 Andrews McMeel Syndication www.wonderword.com 3/10

Admire, Anonymous, Away, Backpack, Book, Card, Care, Companion, Confess, Connection, Courage, Crush, Date, Desire, Diary, Dinner, Dream, Emotion, Entry, Happy, Heart, Honest, Hope, Hugs, Kind, Locker, Mail, Memory, Note, Page, Paper, Pencil, Personal, Photo, Pink, Poem, Proposal, Quote, Read, Rhyme, Ribbon, Share, Sign, Smile, Stamp, Story, Symbol, Text, Wish, Words, Write

Yesterday's Answer: Fireflies

The NEW **Treasury 41** can be purchased online at www.WonderWordBooks.com, or call 1-800-642-6480.

Thompson surprised by Ferrell, lifts Warriors over Clippers

SAN FRANCISCO (AP)—Klay Thompson scored 20 points on a night actor Will Ferrell surprised him and teammates before the game by participating in warmups with the Warriors, and Golden State snapped a five-game skid by beating the Los Angeles Clippers 112-97 on Tuesday night.

Jordan Poole also scored 20 points off the bench while Andrew Wiggins had 14 points and 11 rebounds for the Warriors, who won for just the second time in their last nine games to complete a road-home back-to-back.

Nicolas Batum scored 17 points to lead the Clippers in a second straight defeat following a five-game winning streak.

Ferrell warmed up with Golden State donning a vintage-style headband and dressed in his Jackie Moon jersey from the 2008 hoops film "Semi-Pro." It was a moment that was meant especially for Thompson—who dressed as Moon for Halloween three years ago and loves the movie.

Golden State rested many regulars for Monday's makeup game at Denver, with Stephen Curry, Thompson and Wiggins all sitting out. The Warriors held it together late this time after losing big leads in each of their previous two home games, against Denver and Dallas.

Curry contributed 15 points, five assists and five rebounds, making just 1 of 6 3s, and Splash Brother Thompson began 2 for 9 and missed his initial four 3-point tries before connecting from deep early in the second.

Warriors rookie Jonathan Kuminga had 21 points, six rebounds and six of Golden State's 33 assists.

Fellow rookie Moses Moody earned his eighth start after scoring a career-best 30 points in the makeup game at Denver on Monday.

The teams combined to shoot 15 for 50 in the first quarter and were tied at 21.

AP

Actor Will Ferrell, left, watches as Golden State Warriors guard Klay Thompson warms up for the team's NBA basketball game against the Los Angeles Clippers in San Francisco, Tuesday, March 8, 2022.

LA has lost the last three on the Warriors' home floor since a 108-101 victory on Jan. 6, 2021. Los Angeles was 12 for 45 in the first half, including 4 of 20 on 3s to fall behind 54-36 at the break.

Curry became the Warriors' all-time steals leader with 1,361. Otto Porter Jr. sat out a second consecutive game ill, while Gary Payton II was sidelined for a third straight by left knee soreness. An MRI exam on the knee was clean, coach Steve Kerr said. Golden State has won 17 of 21 at home vs. the Clippers.

Warriors defensive leader Draymond Green is expected back March 14 against the Wizards from a disk injury in his back that gave him an injured calf. He missed his 28th straight game.

Golden State offered encouraging news on second-year center James Wiseman, who has progressed in his rehab from right knee surgery enough that he's ready to play for the G League Warriors in two games this week: at Stockton on Thursday and vs. the G League Ignite on Sunday at Chase Center.

All fans received limited edition purple shoelaces featuring Women's Empowerment Month-related phrases.

Nets 132, Hornets 121

In Charlotte, N.C., Kyrie Irving hit nine 3-pointers and scored a season-high 50 points, and the Brooklyn Nets snapped a four-game skid with a 132-121 win over the Charlotte Hornets on Tuesday night.

Irving became one of 22 players in NBA history with five 50-point games, according to Basketball Reference. His career high is 57 points on March, 12, 2015, while with the Cleveland Cavaliers in an overtime win against San Antonio.

Andre Drummond dominated inside, finishing with 20 points and 14 rebounds for Brooklyn, which got back to .500 on the season and moved into sole possession of eighth place in the Eastern Conference standings, breaking a tie with the Hornets.

Miles Bridges and Terry Rozier each finished with 30 points for Charlotte, which had its two-game win streak snapped. LaMelo Ball added 24 points and seven assists.

Kevin Durant had a quiet 14-point night.

Suns 102, Magic 99

In Orlando, Fla., DeAndre Ayton and Landry Shamet scored 21 points each, and Mikal Bridges blocked a potential tying 3-pointer in the final seconds to help Phoenix hold off Orlando.

After Cameron Payne's two free throws put the Suns up by three with 6.9 seconds left, Orlando's Franz Wagner put up a 3-pointer that Bridges deflected.

Ayton had 19 rebounds and scored the Suns' final two baskets, including a putback with 1:31 left after Orlando had taken a 98-97 lead. Payne finished with 18 points and 12 assists.

Wendell Carter Jr. led Orlando with 20 points and had 12 rebounds. Mo Bamba had nine points and 15 boards.

Cavaliers 127, Pacers 124

In Indianapolis, Darius Garland had 41 points and 13 assists and hit a decisive pair of free throws with 14 seconds left to lead Cleveland past Indiana.

The Pacers went ahead 124-122 with 40 seconds remaining when Malcolm Brogdon was credited with a basket after Evan Mobley was called for goaltending. Mobley then tied the game on a putback before Garland put the Cavs ahead with his free throws.

Dean Wade intercepted a pass by Brogdon on the Pacers' next possession. Lamar Stevens hit a free throw, and Indiana's Tyrese Haliburton missed a desperation heave at the buzzer.

Mobley finished with 22 points and 12 rebounds and Lauri Markkanen added 21 points for Cleveland.

Haliburton led the Pacers with 25 points, and Duane Washington Jr., Jalen Smith and Gogh Bitadze each scored 15.

Bucks 142, Thunder 115

In Oklahoma City, Giannis Antetokounmpo scored 39 points and Milwaukee defeated Oklahoma City for its fifth straight win.

Antetokounmpo made 13 of 19 shots and had seven rebounds and seven assists.

Khris Middleton had 25 points and nine assists, and Bobby Portis added 18 points and 14 rebounds for the Bucks, who scored a season-high point total and shot 53% (53 for 100) from the field.

Shai Gilgeous-Alexander had 33 points, a career-high 14 assists and eight rebounds for the Thunder. It was the sixth time in seven games since the All-Star break that Gilgeous-Alexander has scored at least 30 points.

Grizzlies 132, Pelicans 111

In Memphis, Tenn., Ja Morant had 24 points, eight rebounds and eight assists, and Jaren Jackson Jr. and Desmond Bane added 22 points apiece as Memphis built an early lead and routed New Orleans.

The win solidified Memphis' hold on second place in the Western Conference as the Grizzlies won for the second time in three games. Ziaire Williams finished with 16 points for Memphis.

CJ McCollum led the Pelicans with 32 points, going 13 of 21 from the field, including 5 of 10 from beyond the arc. McCollum also handed out 11 assists. Willy Hernangomez scored 17 points and Naji Marshall 16.

Nets-76ers is big, but each team still a work in progress

By NOAH TRISTER
AP SPORTS WRITER

One month after James Harden and Ben Simmons were traded for each other, it's time for Philadelphia and Brooklyn to meet.

The showdown between the Nets and 76ers is Thursday night at Philadelphia— although it may not be quite the spectacle that was anticipated when the deal was made.

Simmons hasn't played at all for his new team, and it's not clear exactly when he'll be back. Harden has only been on the court for a few games for the 76ers, who are challenging for the top spot in the Eastern Conference.

"Honestly, every game is a big game for us. We're fairly new and we've got championship aspirations, so every game is a learning process for us no matter who we're playing," Harden said after a win over Chicago on Monday night. "Thursday, Brooklyn is going to be a tough challenge, but that's no different than tonight's Chicago Bulls team."

The 76ers and Nets have been headed in opposite directions lately – and that's not a referendum on just Harden and Simmons. Philadelphia is 8-2 since the trade. Harden has played in only five of those games because of left hamstring problems, but he's given the 76ers the type of production that's expected from the 32-year-old superstar: a triple-double and three double-doubles already.

Brooklyn, meanwhile, has lost 17 of its last 20 games, a tailspin that began well before the trade. Like last year, the Nets look like they could be title contenders on paper if their top players are healthy at the right time — but at this point, Brooklyn isn't even assured of a playoff spot unless it can snap out of this funk soon.

Simmons has been dealing with back issues. Kevin Durant missed 21 straight games before returning last week. Kyrie Irving, limited to road games because of New York City's coronavirus-related rules on vaccination, has played with Durant only four times this season. They were both available Sunday at Boston, but the Nets lost 126-120.

"We looked like a brand new team that has never played together before as a group, and they looked like a team that knew exactly what they were doing," coach Steve Nash said. "That's the gap for our group, is to find that cohesion, that understanding, and be able to execute in those situations."

That chemistry is often a concern after the trade deadline, but this year health is a bigger issue with some acquisitions. Simmons is certainly an example of that. Elsewhere in the East, Washington traded for Kristaps Porzingis, but he didn't play for the Wizards until Sunday when he returned from a knee bone bruise.

Washington started 10-3 this season but has slipped all the way to 11th place in the East. In addition to Porzingis, the Wizards have also been without star Bradley Beal recently after he had wrist surgery.

Cleveland has been one of the league's surprise teams, but the Cavaliers are clinging to sixth place — the last spot above the play-in teams — after six defeats in their last eight games. Cleveland traded for guard Caris LeVert, but he's played only four games for the Cavs because of a sprained foot.

Still, Cleveland is in a better spot in the standings than Brooklyn, which is tied for eighth and just two games ahead of 11th-place Washington. The game in Philadelphia on Thursday night, which once seemed like it might be an emotionally charged clash between Simmons and his former team, now looks like just another chance for Durant and Irving to try to right the Nets' ship. They need as many wins as they can get, regardless of who they're against.

The 76ers are in much better shape, but Harden still hasn't played much for them, and they'll want to be as prepared as possible for a huge postseason. For all their high draft picks and high expectations, Philadelphia hasn't advanced past the second round of the playoffs since 2001. Harden has played on an NBA Finals team just once, back when he was with Oklahoma City in 2011-2012.

So there's pressure on the 76ers too, and as charged up as the crowd might be for this game against the Nets, Philadelphia has loftier goals to focus on.

"It's a regular matchup for me, a regular-season game," Philadelphia star Joel Embiid said. "Just have to come in with the same mindset we've had."

Labor relations experts following MLB negotiations from afar

CHICAGO (AP)—Allen Sanderson grew up in Idaho. He played high school baseball and worked for a minor league team in Twin Falls, providing a ride home for Dick Allen long before he became a feared slugger with the Philadelphia Phillies.

That's part of how Sanderson sees baseball's labor strife, as a longtime baseball fan. But he also follows along from a different perspective, one of a sports economist at the University of Chicago.

"What is the right division between the owners and the player? How much should the players get? How much should the owners get?" Sanderson said. "There's no right answer to that question. There may well be to you making french fries at McDonald's or something like that. There probably is a right answer to that question about what's a reasonable amount in a competitive marketplace for you to earn.

"But once you're in the sports world or the entertainment world, something like that, you know just all bets are off. It's largely a function of how well can I negotiate our side in this."

That last part isn't going very well at the moment, not for Major League Baseball or its locked-out players.

Baseball's ninth work stoppage reached 96 days on Monday, and MLB told the union that Tuesday was the last possible day to reach an agreement that would allow a 162-game schedule, along with full salary and service time.

It is the sport's first labor conflict to cause games to be canceled since the 1994-95 strike wiped out the World Series for the first time in 90 years. Negotiations broke off last week after nine days of talks in Jupiter, Florida, and Commissioner Rob Manfred canceled the first two series of the season for each team, a total of 91 games.

While the sides try to chart a path forward, hoping to get baseball back on the field, some experts in labor relations and sports business are watching the dispute from an academic viewpoint.

"I look at it through the collective bargaining lens," said Art Wheaton, the director of labor studies in the Buffalo Co-Lab for Cornell University's industrial and labor relations school.

"The lens, I do a lot of training for unions about negotiations and how to bargain, so anything when it comes to contract time I keep an eye on."

Manfred, Deputy Commissioner Dan Halem and NHL Commissioner Gary Bettman each graduated from the ILR School at Cornell.

When Wheaton looks at the baseball talks, he sees a process bogged down by a complicated mix of audiences that includes big- and small-market owners, players with a wide range of salaries and agents attempting to indirectly influence the negotiations from afar.

"If you can make it collective bargaining where everybody on the company side and everybody on the union side are trying to solve the difference, that's a whole lot better than having all of the different owners pushing their own buttons and all of the different agents also trying to change it," said Wheaton, a Cincinnati Reds and Boston Red Sox fan who follows baseball more closely when it gets to the postseason.

"Collective means working together, and that I think is what has broken down here."

Wheaton also took issue with what he called "deadline bargaining," waiting until the last minute for substantive negotiations in hopes of creating big movement. After Major League Baseball locked out its players in early December, the sides didn't meet again until Jan. 13.

"It's not an unusual tactic. I just don't find it a very helpful tactic," he said. "You add a lot of extra stress and high risk, which some people like because it forces the other side to make a decision. But it's not always the best way to make a good, rational economic decision by waiting until the last minute, throwing all these numbers around."

The long-term effect of the lockout remains to be seen. It took baseball years to recover the last time it canceled games because of a labor action, and Manfred is likely to wipe out more of the schedule if there isn't a resolution soon.

"I think that what baseball is doing is turning off the casual fan and turning off the young fan," said Stephen Greyser, a marketing and communications professor in the Harvard Business School and a a longtime Red Sox season-ticket holder.

"The reality is those people are not going to be getting any more interested in going to games or watching games on TV by not having games at all and not having the season start."

AP

Seattle Mariners gather as the MLB logo is shown during a review of an attempted catch by right fielder Mitch Haniger of a ball hit by Tampa Bay Rays' Ji-Man Choi that was originally called an out during the ninth inning of a baseball game Friday, June 18, 2021, in Seattle.

MLB, union bargain past midnight to salvage 162-game season

NEW YORK (AP)—Negotiators for locked-out players and Major League Baseball bargained past midnight for the second time in a week, and Commissioner Rob Manfred's Tuesday deadline to reach a deal preserving a 162-game season passed with no announcement.

There was no word from Manfred of additional canceled games as the lockout entered its 98th day. The sides were exchanging numbers on the key economic issues of the luxury tax, the amount of a new bonus pool for pre-arbitration-eligible players and minimum salaries.

Union chief negotiator Bruce Meyer and general counsel Ian Penny headed a bargaining team that met in the morning at MLB's office across the street from Radio City Music Hall.

About three hours later, Deputy Commissioner Dan Halem, Executive Vice President Morgan Sword and Senior Vice President Pat Houlihan made the three-block walk for a 20-minute visit to the union's office overlooking Rockefeller Center that ended shortly before 2:30 p.m.

The sides continued speaking later in the day by telephone from their separate offices. In addition to exchanging numbers, MLB pushed for its long-held goal of an international amateur draft.

Yet, it remained unclear whether this more intensive phase of talks would lead to an agreement or yet another breakdown in oft-strained negotiations that have dragged on for nearly a year.

About 16 1/2 hours of bargaining in Jupiter, Florida, that began Feb. 28 and ended at 2:30 a.m. the following morning produced progress but led only to an angry breakdown in talks the following afternoon, when Manfred announced the first two series for each team during the season had been canceled.

While it appears there is no chance opening day could take place as scheduled March 31, MLB told the union that Tuesday was the last possible day to reach an agreement that would allow a modified 162-game schedule, along with full salary and service time needed to reach free agency for players.

MLB on Tuesday offered a tax threshold starting at $230 million and rising to $242 million, a person familiar with the proposal said, confirming a move first reported by The Athletic. The person, speaking to The Associated Press on condition of anonymity because no public statements were authorized, said management's proposal contained tougher penalties at a higher payroll level than in the expired agreement.

The union began the week at $238 million for this year, rising to $263 million in 2026.

The union entered Monday asking for an $80 million bonus pool for this year and MLB was at $30 million. MLB offered a $700,000 minimum salary and the union asked for $725,000.

There were greater differences in the final four seasons of the proposed five-year deal. The union's proposed figure for 2026 was $263 million at the start of the week.

MLB BRIEFS

MLB launches $1M fund for ballpark workers, matching union

NEW YORK (AP)—Major League Baseball launched a $1 million fund Tuesday to support spring training workers impacted by canceled games, matching the amount of the fund the players' association announced last week.

MLB said the money will be administered by teams to part-time and seasonal workers based on financial need. Eligible groups include concessionaires, grounds crew, security, clubhouse and ballpark workers,

MLB said it plans to announce a fund for seasonal and part-time workers affected by missed regular-season games.

"Regrettably, the people who make Spring Training a first-class experience for our fans have been affected through no fault of their own," baseball Commissioner Rob Manfred said. "Major League Baseball and our Clubs remain committed to supporting our most vulnerable staff."

The players' association said Friday its fund will be administered by the union and the AFL-CIO.

The union also announced a $500,000 fund to support not-for-profit youth development programs whose fundraising and promotion were disrupted by spring training cancellations. Applications are due March 31 for grants of up to $5,000.

Apple, MLB announce 'Friday Night Baseball' package

CUPERTINO, Calif. (AP)—Apple will enter the live sports coverage arena with "Friday Night Baseball."

Apple and Major League Baseball announced Tuesday that Apple TV+ will carry a weekly doubleheader on Friday nights in eight countries when the regular season begins. Games will initially be available without the need for an Apple TV+ subscription.

The games will be exclusively on Apple TV+ and will not be available on teams' regional sports networks.

MLB has been under a work stoppage since owners locked out players at the end of the collective bargaining agreement. At 97 days, it is the second-longest work stoppage in baseball history.

The broadcasts on Apple TV+ will include pregame and postgame shows and will not be subject to local broadcast blackout restrictions. They will be produced by MLB Network.

Besides being shown in the United States, Canada and Mexico, games will also initially be available in Australia, Brazil, Japan, South Korea, and the United Kingdom.

The agreement also includes the "MLB Big Inning" weekday show for fans in the US as well as a livestream channel for those watching in the US and Canada.

MLB has been exploring selling a weeknight package of games with ESPN reducing its coverage of the regular season to 30 games, mostly on Sunday nights. Turner Sports will have games on Tuesday nights under a new rights deal that begins this season.

Apple and MLB have been closely aligned for years. MLB At Bat was one of the first apps to go live on the Apple app store in 2008.

The deal also comes as Apple is looking to expand to other leagues. The company has been pursuing streaming of NFL games when the league's "Sunday Ticket" expires at the end of the upcoming season.

SIS vs Hopwood 1 in MS badminton finals

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
roselyn_monroyo@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Saipan International School and Hopwood Middle School 1 recorded contrasting semis wins in the TakeCare Insurance Interscholastic Badminton League to arrange their title duel for the middle school championship this Saturday at the TSL Sports Complex.

The top-seeded Hopwood 1 dominated No. 4 ranked Francisco M. Sablan Middle School in their semis match last Saturday, 12-3, while No. 2 SIS foiled an all-Hilitai finale after outclassing No. 3 Hopwood 2 in the other Final Four pairing, 10-5. The Hopwood 1-SIS title showdown will be played this Saturday, starting at 2:15pm with the finalists competing in the boys and girls singles and doubles and mixed events.

The Geckos swept the first three events in their playoff match against Hopwood 2 to advance to the finale. Lina Tsukagoshi and Julie Chavez teamed up in the girls doubles and handed SIS the win over Maria Quidato and Roxlynn Ferrer, 11-4, 11-1. A straight game win gives the prevailing squad three points, while two markers are awarded for a three-game victory with the loser getting a point.

Tsukagoshi delivered three more points for SIS when she swept Jerica Manuel in the girls singles, 11-8, 11-3, while Hunter DeRocher and Frank Li added another three markers following an 11-9, 11-6 triumph over Jiang Zhi Xiang and Guan Juan Hao in the boys doubles. Hopwood 2 then recovered from three straight losses when Marlon Bautista won against Jacky Lui in the boys singles, 11-10, 8-11, 11-1, and Lin Jung Yong and Charmaine Bautista slipped past DeRocher and Chavez, 6-11, 11-9, 11-10.

In the Hopwood 1-FMS semis collision, the former prevailed in all four of the five events.

Anas Wasee and Munim Abdul scored the first win in the match when they outlasted Hopwood 1's Miguel Castro and John Quidato in the boys doubles, 11-7, 10-11, 11-5. However, that was it for FMS, as Hopwood 1 took over to reach the finals.

Princess Pedrano and Shamriah Hicaro defeated Sisther Fred and Shaina Malonzo in the girls doubles, 11-3, 11-8; Theresa Lin Ahn topped Malonzo in the girls singles, 11-10, 9-11, 11-10; Quidato swept Wasee in the boys singles, 11-9, 11-4; and Ahn and Quidato partnered in beating Adbul and Chrisha Marciano in the mixed doubles, 11-10, 11-8.

Hopwood 1 advanced to the semis after topping the round-robin preliminaries with its 59-16 record. SIS came in at second with its 52-23 mark and was followed by Hopwood 2 (50-25), FMS (37-38), Tinian Junior High (24-51), and Tanapag Middle School (3-72).

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

A Saipan International School player makes a return to Hopwood Middle School 2 during their earlier round robin game in the TakeCare Insurance Interscholastic Badminton League at the TSL Sports Complex.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Hopwood Middle School players in action during their earlier round robin game against Francisco M. Sablan Middle School in the TakeCare Insurance Interscholastic Badminton League at the TSL Sports Complex.

MHS 1 leads

Meanwhile, Marianas High School 1 is assured of one of the four semis berths, as it finished the prelims with a 61-14 record. SIS has a 54-21 card, while Saipan Southern High School has a 38-37 mark, and MHS 2 has a 22-38 slate with one game left (against Tinian). Kagman High School so far was 10-35 with two games remaining, while Tinian has three more left and holds a 7-38 slate.

The remaining round-robin games will be played this Saturday morning, while the title and consolation matches are scheduled in the afternoon.

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"Other than repairs to its windows, we would facilitate badminton at its present condition. We could live with what we have in badminton because procurement for Taraflex flooring is on its way and we just need to put up the net and we're on. No air-conditioning as it won't happen before the Games but there'll be enough air circulation."

The MGOC official said the grant from the Federal Emergency Management Agency is still there but it's his understanding that the processing—getting out proposals, obtaining bids, and awarding and procurement—requires 150 days. "And we're literally 100 days before the Games."

For the Francisco M. Palacios Baseball Field, he said contract to repair the baseball facility and the notice to proceed have both been signed.

"We will do what is needed, primarily the infield and the grounds. In terms of the fencing, we will just have to deal with the existing fencing and pull it and straighten it out, repair it, and do what it takes to obviously make it safe and presentable. We really don't have enough time to do the entire fencing. Dugouts and the press box will be completed."

For beach volleyball, Babauta said work at the Crowne Plaza beach sand courts is ongoing. "We have quite a few improvements on the grounds—both clearing and taking out debris—from the concessionaires and the basically the surroundings area."

Among the sports venues, golf seems to be the most ready with the Coral Ocean Point Golf Resort 99% complete, according to Babauta. "Coral Ocean Point management continues to invest on maintenance and greens-keepers, etc."

The MGOC is more than half way in laying lines and the buoys for the outrigger canoe competition.

"There's a team in the water facilitating the anchors for the buoys. We will complete them by April and we can actually test the lanes with the va'a national team."

As far as equipment is concerned, Babauta said all the 18 V1s they've received so far are in their warehouse. The second batch of V6s, which is another six units, will arrive end of the month with the last set of V6s expected in the first week of May.

For weightlifting, Babauta said training is ongoing at the MGOC warehouse No. 4 and procurement of weightlifting equipment will arrive on April 2. As far as the venue is concerned, the said the Marianas High School Gymnasium is pretty much ready and it only needs the installation of temporary air-conditioning units.

He said unlike badminton, the MGOC is required to install air-conditioning at MHS because the Mini Games will take place the same time as the Oceania Senior Weightlifting Championships.

For tennis, he said they are still awaiting the approval to use the American Memorial Park tennis courts from the National Park Services. He said once they get the green light, they will start resurfacing the four tennis courts and they expect the work to be completed in the first half of May.

Babauta said the MGOC and the Triathlon Association of the CNMI are flying back to Rota in March 15 for a final meeting with Rota Mayor Efraim Atalig and his Cabinet members. "The sites for triathlon are ready. The Rota Roundhouse should be completed by early May. The marina right near the pontoon is also pretty much set," he said.

SALTY

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students," said Kitami.

They also said their good friend who recently passed, Big John, was a big part of them taking up the sport of fishing.

Salty Bandits finished second in last year's Saipan International Fishing Derby and actually placed the past four years they've compete. Kitami said it sure felt good to come in first place for a change.

"It was hard but we actually managed to fish the right specie today. So we got lucky today".

Asked why they named their 17-foot Boston Whaler Montauk *Salty Bandits,* Kitami said it's because they're always in the water and they're really bad—in a good way—when they go fishing.

Mada Flyer of skipper Lino Tenorio finished second with a 41.1-lb wahoo and also took the total weight prize for his boat's aggregate catch of 96.8 lbs. In all, Tenorio and crew won $2,000 ($1,500 for finishing second and $500 for the total weight bounty).

Team Red aboard the *CM-6428PU* came in third after captain Jesse D. Taitano landed a 40.2-lb wahoo, while Keilani-Ko (*CM-152PU)* of Frank A. Reyes completed the Top 3 with a 31.7-lb catch. Team Red and Keilani-Ko earned $1,000 and in-kind prizes, respectively, for their effort.

The 3rd Annual Wahoo in the Marianas saw 37 boats launch from the Smiling Cove Marina and was sponsored by Mobil Oil Marianas and IT&E.

According to its website, Tasi to Table was established in July of 2020 and its goal is to pass along knowledge of fishing to future generations of people in the CNMI. It teach students various fishing techniques and the skills needed for each type of fishing method. From trolling pelagic species, to deep drop fishing, shoreline casting, to throwing nets *(talaya)*, Tasi to Table and its affiliated members are well equipped to provide these learning opportunities to its students.

RAULERSON

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said she's looking forward to earn a spot in coach Jeff Race's squad and is confident about her chances.

"I think my chances are high because I play at a collegiate level and we practice everyday. My strengths are my serve, mentality, and approach shot."

Raulerson finished her freshman year with the Golden Rams with a 9-4 record in singles. ASU plays in the Southern Intercollegiate Athletic Conference of the NCAA Division II.

"I fund college tennis with an academic and sports scholarship. My most impressive outing was our game against Clark Atlanta University last year. I am super excited to represent the Northern Marianas. It has always been my lifelong goal to put our island on the map," she said.

The 5'6" Raulerson, who went to San Vicente Elementary School, Hopwood Middle School, and Marianas High School before transferring to East Ridge High School in Clermont, Florida, said aside from taking part in the Mini Games she can't wait to return to the island where she grew up.

"I miss the mix of different cultures and the unique environment Saipan is. Everybody knows each other and is around the corner."

Raulerson will be one of five women players who will duke it out for the two remaining slots. The other four are Tania Tan, Malika Miyawaki, Hye Jin Elliot, and Serin Chung.

Six men's players, meanwhile, will compete for the two remaining slots in the men's team and they are Ken Song, Tony Atalig, Colin Ramsey, Bobby Cruz, Luther Lizama, and Morris Villanueva.

Race earlier named 2019 Mini Games gold medalists Colin Sinclair, Robbie Schorr, and Carol Lee and Samoa Mini Games veteran Isabel Herras to the Mini Games national tennis team.

A total of 116 players from 16 countries are expected to take part in the tennis competition of this year's Mini Games that will be hosted at the American Memorial Park tennis courts in Garapan and the Pacific Islands Club Saipan tennis courts in San Antonio.

The 15 countries that have signed up are the Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, Guam, Kiribati, Nauru, New Caledonia, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tahiti, Tonga, Tuvalu, Vanuatu, Wallis & Futuna, and the CNMI.

Thompson surprised by Ferrell, lifts Warriors over Clippers
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SIS vs Hopwood 1 in MS badminton finals
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99 DAYS BEFORE OPENING

Work ongoing for Mini Games facilities

MARK RABAGO
Five 20-foot containers with materials and supplies to upgrade the Oleai track field are parked at the back of the flagpoles of the facility on the side of the Saipan Mayor's Office building in Oleai.

By MARK RABAGO
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ASSOCIATE EDITOR

Ninety-nine days before the opening of the biggest sporting event the CNMI will be hosting in its history, the Northern Marianas Pacific Mini Games 2022 Organizing Committee is doing its best to prepare the venues for the nine sports offered in the quadrennial event set from June 17 to 25 this year.

Games organizing committee CEO Vicente "Ben" Babauta said the good news is that the Oleai track and field is finally ready for its much-needed makeover with the arrival of materials.

"We have five 20-foot containers specifically for track and field materials and supplies. It's parked near the Saipan Mayor's Office or right behind the flagpoles. As of this morning, the contract to refurbish the Oleai track and field has been signed and also the notice to proceed. The plan is we need to shut down the track and field to commence work," he said.

For badminton, Babauta unfortunately said the long-awaited air-conditioning units for the Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium won't be installed before the Mini Games

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Raulerson to try out in May

By MARK RABAGO
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ASSOCIATE EDITOR

Former Saipan resident and Albany State University varsity player Asia Raulerson will fly out to Saipan in May to try out for the CNMI National Tennis Team for this year's Northern Marianas Pacific Mini Games 2022.

The 19-year-old, who is the daughter of former Marianas High School teacher John and Pattana Raulerson,

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Raulerson

Salty Bandits uses purple lure to top Wahoo in Marianas

MARK RABAGO
Salty Bandits captain Masaki Kitami, second from right, and crew hand Austin Benavente, second from left, pose with student volunteers after getting their first place plaque and cash and in-kind prizes during the awards ceremony of the Tasi to Table Inc.'s 3rd Annual Wahoo in the Marianas last Saturday at the Smiling Cove Marina weighing station.

By MARK RABAGO
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ASSOCIATE EDITOR

The *Salty Bandits* crew tasted sweet success after catching the weightiest wahoo in Tasi to Table Inc.'s 3rd Annual Wahoo in the Marianas last Saturday.

Captain Masaki Kitami and crew hand Austin Benavente, both 21 years old, reeled in a 48.2-lb wahoo to take the $2,000 top prize and bragging rights for a whole year.

Kitami said this is the first time they won the top prize in any fishing derby and they attributed their success to their lure, or more specifically the color of their lure.

"This is actually the first fishing derby that we ever won. The secret was color of the lure which was purple. We caught the winning wahoo on the backside of Tinian. Caught it around 6:30am in the morning. We picked up the lines then launched and came back home around 12 o'clock and prayed to be first all the way," he said.

Apart from catching the winning wahoo, Kitami and Benavente said they're just happy to return safely from their fishing trip.

"It was a big fish and it was rough and raining. We had good fun and that's all what matters in fishing. We want to dedicate the win to Tasi to Table. This is for you guys, especially the volunteers and

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